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ABSTRACT

This book presents 50 strategies for including students with severe disabilities in regular classrooms. Introductory sections review the trend towards increased classroom integration and explain a philosophy of successful integration. The 50 strategies are each introduced by a thought-provoking quote or statistic, some general information, and then specific information about how to implement the strategy. Additional resources are often suggested. Strategies address the following: use of "People First" terminology, managing professional literature and conferences, strategic planning through an integration task force, "All About Me" books, asking students for ideas, simulations, school chores, a disability quiz, passing out "stuff" (papers, books, tests, etc.) in the classroom, work folders, conversation books, guest readers, curricular infusion, communication log books, working with para-educators, an environment checklist, organizational tools, peer tutoring, hints for peer tutors, scheduling for inclusion, helping children to make friends, learning styles, cooperative learning, adapted equipment, a school store, circles of friends, natural proportions, grading, informal inclusion, needs assessment, recess, a quick student information form, the library, parents, academic modification, art/music/physical education classes, student investigators, integrated therapy, finding time to talk, collaborative teaching, disruptive behavior, schedule reminders, choices, lunch pals, simulating learning differences, using computers, academic modifications in reading, the role of support personnel, visiting successful integration efforts, and brainstorming. (DB)

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IDEAS

— for —

INCLUSION

The Classroom Teacher's Guide to Integrating Students With Severe Disabilities

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Anne M. Beninghof

IDEAS

for

INCLUSION

The Classroom Teacher's Guide to Integrating Students With Severe Disabilities

Anne M. Beninghof

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Acknowledgments

For Vivian, my student and my teacher, from whom I learned about the darkness of segregation.

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Introduction

> *"We are for difference: for respecting difference, for allowing difference, for encouraging difference, until difference no longer makes a difference."*
>
> JOHNETTA B. COLE

This statement, made by the President of Spellman College in 1990, has played an important role in guiding my thoughts and actions over the last few years. It is a statement which addresses the importance of valuing diversity in every way—in our way of thinking and feeling, as well as in our way of acting. It is a particularly powerful statement because it does not identify a specific group of people for whom we should allow diversity, but instead says, by not specifying, that all groups of people should be welcomed.

This belief is taking hold in our public schools. Everywhere you turn you see school mission statements committed to serving **all** students, school budgets which are responding to multicultural needs, university courses examining methods for teaching heterogeneous groups, and classroom populations that defy simple categorization.

Included in the growing diversity in our schools are students with disabilities. Once excluded, these children are now being welcomed by more and more school communities. However, while the school philosophy may respect and allow diversity, specific methods for encouraging the integration of students with disabilities can be difficult to find.

Over the last five years, I have had the opportunity to explore strategies for integration with hundreds of teachers, principals, related professionals, administrators, and parents. Most of these people, through trial and error, have developed integration strategies that are simple and effective. Many of the ideas have come from common sense, from past experiences with other types of children, or from brainstorming until a unique solution was found. While no one idea is ever the whole solution, each individual strategy has the propensity for building upon another until students with disabilities are fully included in their community.

During these experiences, I have also found that people do not need to be "experts" on integration to be able to do something to encourage integration. Just as I don't need to be an expert on the biochemical breakdown of metals to recycle my soft drink cans, neither do you need to fully understand the chromosomal abnormalities of a child with XYZ Syndrome in order to facilitate his or her participation in recess activities. Therefore, the 50 strategies included on the following pages are designed to be simple enough so that anyone can take a step toward integration.

Each of the different strategies includes some thought provoking quote or statistic related to integration, some general information about the idea, and then specific information about how to achieve that particular strategy. Then, if you want more information, many of the strategies include additional resources. There are many thorough resources available from libraries or for minimal cost commercially. If you come across some additional resources which are not listed, you may want to jot them down beneath the others for safe keeping, and then share them with a friend. I also encourage you to share this resource—copy a good idea and send it to another team member; bring it to the next meeting of an organization you belong to. The more we share our ideas, the quicker we'll be likely to achieve the goal of "difference no longer mak(ing) a difference."

What's Happening?

Some Background

After thousands of years of mistreatment and exclusion from society, people with disabilities and their advocates began to demand attention. During the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, attention was given to the right of **all** citizens to receive a quality education. For example, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the case of Brown v. State Board of Education (1954) that segregated education is inherently unequal, and that such segregated education denies citizens their constitutional right to equal opportunity. This ruling helped to empower the parents of children with disabilities to advocate for equal educational services for their children.

Following this ruling, parents and professionals began to band together in organizations in an attempt to influence the legal and educational systems to provide services to children with disabilities. Much of the early effort focused on obtaining basic educational services for these children, and it wasn't until the 1970s that the direction shifted to obtaining integrated educational services.

Federal legislators responded to these efforts by enacting the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) in 1975. This law safeguards the rights of children with disabilities to receive free and appropriate education in the "least restrictive environment." However, the term "least restrictive environment" is defined very generally in the law and, therefore, has been interpreted in a myriad of ways, leading to a wide variety of service delivery models.

Current Trends

While P.L. 94-142, and its reauthorization P.L. 101-476, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), requires that a continuum of placement options be available for students with disabilities, certain trends in service delivery can be identified.

Dismantling of Institutions

Even prior to 1975, many advocates were calling for the dismantling of institutions. While large institutions were once thought to be safe, protective environments for persons with disabilities, by the middle of the Twentieth Century it was clear that they were detrimental to the residents in a variety of ways. Following the passage of P.L. 94-142, the move to deinstitutionalize grew stronger due to the "least restrictive environment" provisions. While institutions still exist, many have closed, and most of the remaining institutions have been dramatically reduced in size.

Community Instruction

As people with disabilities have moved out of segregated settings and into communities, obvious needs have arisen. In order to become integral members of their community, people with disabilities need to be instructed in certain skills required for community living. Experience has shown that the best place to teach community skills is within the community itself. And so, a critical component of any quality program for students with disabilities includes a focus on community instruction. Depending on the age of the student, community can refer to the school community and/or the public community. The important factor is that students must first be physically integrated in order to learn the skills necessary to participate in integrated environments.

Increased Classroom Integration

While many students with disabilities are still in self-contained classrooms, many students are now being placed part- or full-time in regular education classrooms. This holds true for students with all levels of disability. (Yes, **all** levels of disability.) In addition, students are now being integrated for academic classes as well as the traditional "specials" of art, music, and physical education.

Critical to the success of integration is the level of administrative commitment to whatever arrangements are made. Often, integrated experiences are arrived at through "teacher deals." This means that the teachers have reached an agreement on their own and will try to make it work. While commendable, and often necessary, teacher deals are likely to face many obstacles along the way. Ideally, integrated experiences should be guided by a mission statement adopted and **supported** by the school administration (see Strategy #3). Schools with administrative support for integration are the most likely to have long-term, successful experiences.

Collaborative Relationships

As more students with disabilities are finding their way into regular education classrooms, more professionals are recognizing the benefits of collaborating with their colleagues. For staff, collaborative relationships serve to expand resources, increase creativity and skill, and provide emotional support. For students, collaborative relationships between staff provide more comprehensive instructional strategies, a diversity of adults to reflect "real world" situations, and opportunities to access new classroom environments with proper levels of support.

Collaborative relationships can assume many forms. Collaborative consultation can involve outside or in-system consultants who work with other professionals to share expertise and problem solve. Collaborative relationships can also include team teaching between a regular and special educator for a lesson, a unit, or full-time (see Strategy #40). While there are many different examples of collaborative relationships, the common denominator in all of them is a belief in "shared responsibility" (Will, 1986) for all students.

Terminology

Perhaps one of the most frustrating current trends is the proliferation of jargon used to describe "integration." (I hesitated to even use the word "integration" in the proceeding sentence because of the variety of meanings it holds for different people.) Some examples of key terms and their various descriptions follow:

- Mainstreaming—An ERIC Digest article (1989, p. 1) states that the term mainstreaming "implies regular classroom placement for all children with handicaps." However, Simpson and Edwards (1980, p. 59) write that "integral to the concept of mainstreaming is a continuum of service." These conflicting definitions are good examples of confusion over the meaning of mainstreaming. Perhaps Biklen (1985, p. 3) says it best when he writes "the term mainstreaming defies simple definition . . . to some it is a code word for 'dumping' . . . to others it means carefully integrating students with disabilities into regular schools and classes with appropriate support services and planning."

- Integration—While Biklen, Lehr, Searl, and Taylor (1987, p. 11) define integration as "more comprehensive than mainstreaming," Hanline and Murray (1984, p. 274) write that "integration is **not** mainstreaming. Handicapped children who are integrated spend the majority of each school day in a special education classroom . . . ." To many, integration implied inclusion in only a few classes, primarily for social reasons. And finally, Forest and Lusthaus (1989, p. 44) points out that the Random House College Dictionary defines integration as "the act or instance of combining into an integral whole." Like the term "mainstreaming," the term "integration" clearly has multiple meanings.

- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)—Although many people define LRE differently, it is the only one of these terms that has a legal definition. P.L. 94-142 defines LRE as:

  > *. . . to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children . . . are educated with children who are not handicapped, and, that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.*

- Regular Education Initiative (REI)—Wang (1988, p. 36) writes that the REI concept "suggests that children with special needs could be best served if regular classroom teachers worked with special educators to learn strategies for teaching all students, all of the time." Madeline Will drew public attention to the concept in 1986, when, as Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, she published an article calling for a move towards "shared responsibility" between regular and special educators. The REI has caused much concern and confusion among special and regular educators over the last few years. Some see it as a move to disband special education completely, some see it as a means for Federal deregulation, and others see it as another name for integration. However, the earliest descriptions appear to intend the REI to be simply a combining of best practices, and encouragement of creativity and cooperation.

- Inclusion—Certainly the newest entry in the jargon of special education, "inclusion" is defined by NASBE (1992) as meaning that "students attend their home school with their age and grade peers . . . are not isolated into special classes or wings within the school." When speaking with a group of parents and educators, Marsha Forest explained, "Integration truly has a much deeper meaning that's expressed in the terms 'inclusion' and 'belonging'." Many parents and professionals are now using this term to describe full-time regular education environments for students with any type of disability. Others use the term inclusion to refer to a process or attitude which is fully accepting of all children. However, some are using the term inclusion to refer to only certain types of children.

Does the jargon jungle seem any more clear? If not, don't be dismayed . . . there doesn't seem to be any single definition for any of the words. The important thing is to be aware of the variety of meanings in use when discussing "integration" with colleagues and friends.

For the purposes of this book, the term "integration" will be used to refer to the huge variety of experiences in which students with and without disabilities are brought together.

. . . .

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Underlying Philosophy of Successful Integration

Every action we take communicates, to some degree, our beliefs and philosophy of life. For example, if someone enjoys rock climbing as a hobby, he or she may be communicating a belief that many benefits are derived from taking risks. If someone is very careful with his or her personal appearance, it may communicate a belief in the power of first impressions or that one's looks affect one's mood. Because our actions do communicate so many messages to observers, it may be important to ensure that these actions are correctly communicating our beliefs about integration.

Therefore, the following philosophical principles or beliefs, which are common to successful integration efforts, are described so that actions or steps which you undertake may have a solid philosophical base.

Partial Participation

Have you ever gone to an art museum and wandered through the modern art wing? At times you may hear art experts discussing the lines or the meaning of a particular painting—you look at the same painting and see . . . just splashes of colored paint. And yet you continue to go to art galleries, even though you don't understand every detail and can't participate in the experience to the extent that others appear to participate. This experience is sometimes called "partial participation" (Brown, 1979, p. 89) in the special education lingo. Partial participation simply means that a child can benefit from participating in an activity, even if he or she can not participate to the same extent as other children. Believing in this philosophical principle opens up almost every school activity to integration for almost any student.

Risk Taking

How many of you consider yourselves "Big R" Risk takers (someone who takes the really big risks in life)? How many of you consider yourselves "small r" risk takers (someone who takes the risks everyday life brings along)? Everyone of us falls into one of these two categories, because in real life it's impossible to not be a risk taker of some kind. The philosophical principle of "dignity of risk" proposes that students with disabilities deserve the dignity and growth that comes from taking risks. Believing in this principle allows us to let children enter into integrated experiences, where the constant possibility of risk also brings the constant possibility of growth.

Normalization

The philosophy of "normalization" (Nirje, 1969) implies that children with disabilities should have made available to them experiences and opportunities that are as close as possible to those that typical children are given. It does not mean that there is one "normal" way in which all children should be treated, or that we should attempt to "normalize" children with disabilities. Instead, believing in this philosophy means that by treating children as normally as possible, we will be providing them with the best opportunities to learn and become members of our communities.

Interdependence

Goals for students with disabilities have traditionally focused upon their need to become independent. And yet none of us is truly independent. We rely on our car mechanic, our banker, our neighbors, our family members—in fact, we are interdependent because these same people rely on us, too. Shifting our focus to encouraging interdependence for students allows us to recognize the value of the "4th R"—reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic, and **relationships**. The skills needed for relationships, such as communication and cooperation, are now being recognized as critical for all students.

Individuality

Last, but not least, is the principle of "individuality." If we are truly interested in providing the best education for each individual student, then integration must also be individualized. Perhaps this is why it is so difficult to define and describe integration—because at its best, integration looks different every time, for every child.

Each of these philosophical principles can take on a variety of appearances in practice. However, no matter what your actions, if they are based on these principles, your integration efforts are likely to be very successful.

. . . .

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Brown, L. (1979). A strategy for developing chronologically age-appropriate and functional curricular content for severly handicapped adolescents and young adults. *Journal of Special Education, 13*(1), 81-90.

1

People First!

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal and have the right to liberty, justice and the pursuit of happiness . . . "

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Throughout our lives we have all experienced what it is like to be labeled. We may have been "the teacher's pet" or "the class clown," "the rich snob" or "the poor raggamuffin," or perhaps "the workaholic" or "the underachiever." Whatever our labels may have been, we probably wished that others would just take the time to get to know the real us.

People with disabilities have also experienced many labels over the years. Labels have included everything from "idiot" to "crip," "retard" to "ED," and "mongoloid" to "Down's." Like us, people with disabilities would like to be known beyond the labels they have been stuck with.

In the early 1980s, a number of adults with disabilities began to form a self-advocacy group. They struggled over the choice of a name for their new group. Would "Disabled Americans" or "Handicapped United" be the most appropriate name for them? None of the titles discussed felt right, until someone finally spoke up and claimed that they wanted to be seen as a person first. And so the group adopted the title "People First."

People First has contributed to the lives of people with disabilities in many ways, but perhaps the most important has been their effect on our language. Their advocacy has encouraged people to use language which focuses on our common humanity, while considering characteristics as a less important descriptor. Terms such as "mentally retarded" or "LD" are being replaced with terms such as "the student with mental retardation," or "the child with learning disabilities" (person first, characteristic second). Due to People First's efforts, many professional organizations and journals will no longer accept material which does not emphasize the person first. In addition, more and more often you may notice parents and professionals in the field using more humanizing language in their speech.

You, too, can change your language and encourage others to join you. This step toward integration may seem small and subtle, but it can have a large impact on our way of thinking, hence, our way of acting. Begin by monitoring your speech for the "old" way of referring to persons with disabilities. Ask a colleague to monitor your speech and remind you when you've used the old terminology. Better yet, find a colleague who would also like to change his or her language, and monitor each other. By paying just a little bit of attention you'll find that in no time at all you'll have changed your language.

Additional Resources

For more information on promoting integration through language, you can contact:

People First
P.O Box 7230
West Hartford, CT 06107

Or check out:

RTC/IL. (1987). *Guidelines for reporting and writing about people with disabilities.* Lawrence, KS: Research and Training Center on Independent Living, University of Kansas.

2

Managing Professional Literature & Conferences

"How would you feel if your doctor told you he hadn't read a medical journal in the last two years?"

THOMAS H. POWELL

The Current Index to Journals in Education (1992) lists 952 education related journals currently in publication. The number of education related newsletters published regularly is almost impossible to calculate. And yet we all recognize the need to stay current and up-to-date in the field of education if we are going to provide our students with a quality program. Now, with an emphasis on collaboration between regular and special education, it is important to know the latest information in both areas! How can we manage?

A school in Danbury, Connecticut developed a unique system for sharing the latest information among interested parties. A list was drawn up of the various journals each staff member subscribed to. For each journal, one person took "ownership." This meant that they made a commitment to copy the Table of Contents each time it arrived. This copy was then sent around to the other staff members so that they could review the titles. If anyone was interested in reading an articles they simply put their initials next to the title. Then, the "owner" made a copy of any articles chosen and shared them with the interested parties. By sharing the responsibilities and the resources, everyone benefited!

Keeping up-to-date can also include attending workshops and conferences. Many professionals are getting into the practice of taking a colleague from the "other" field (e.g., a regular educator invites a special educator) as a partner to workshops. In fact, some workshop sponsors are now requiring participants to register in pairs of special and regular educators in order to attend workshops on integration. If you are unable to attend a workshop with someone else, consider sharing some of the information and ideas you have gathered at a weekly staff meeting. Presenting this information to others will both reinforce your learning and broaden other people's knowledge base in an efficient manner.

Additional Resources

There are also many organizations, local and national, dedicated to sharing resources and information related to people with disabilities. The following are only a couple:

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities,
P.O.Box 1492, Washington, D.C. 20013. (800) 999-5599.

NICCYD serves as an exchange network for information and ideas that are helpful to children and youth with disabilities and the people who care for and about them. All information and services are provided by NICCYD free of charge.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped & Gifted Children, The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091.

Reference

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3

Strategic Planning Through an Integration Task Force

> *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*
>
> MARGARET MEAD

The phrase "task force" is highly underrated. It generally conjures up images of a group of bored individuals sitting around a table listening to each other talk. However, the phrase literally describes a group of individuals who have the power or force to complete their chosen mission or task.

Most school systems which have been successful at integrating students with disabilities have done so based on the efforts and recommendations of an "Integration Task Force." This task force is typically composed of regular and special education teachers, administrators, and parents, but can also include advocates, students, and Board of Education members. Depending on the size and composition of the group, the amount of time and work involved can vary considerably. Usually groups of five to eight people allow for maximum interaction and communication. If a greater number of people want to be involved, it may be worthwhile to have the smaller group gather information from others prior to actual working meetings.

The task(s) for the group can include the development of a mission statement regarding integration, the design of goals, objectives, and tasks to achieve the mission, and an evaluation plan (see the "Sample Integration Action Plan" for examples). Following the development of the "action plan," it is critical to obtain support from the Superintendent and Board of Education prior to dissemination. Once that support has been obtained, the group can expand to find others to assist in the implementation of the activities.

Often, all it takes to get a task force underway is one person willing to undertake the initial organization. For ideas on setting up an Integration Task Force, you may want to first talk with your neighboring school districts to explore their experiences.

Additional Resources

In addition, there are many resources available which describe the process of systems change, including the development of comprehensive action plans, such as:

Burrello, L., Larson, C., DeWayne, K., & Talbot, S. (1989). *Strategic planning: Creating better schools through effective team leadership.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.

Wilson, W.C. (1989). Administrative strategies for integration. In R. Gaylord-Ross (Ed.), *Integration strategies for students with handicaps.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Sample Integration Action Plan

Mission: The mission of Pleasant School system is to provide the most appropriate, individualized educational plans and services to **all** students through a total school team approach which encourages joint venture and collaborative effort.

Goals

1. To develop structured communication systems between regular educators, special educators, administrators, parents, and support services.
2. To provide time and resources for collaboration between team members.
3. To develop guidelines for the classroom placement of all children, whether labeled or not.
4. To serve all Pleasant students in local buildings.
5. To individualize curriculum for every student.
6. To change staff attitudes towards integration of students with disabilities.

Sample Objectives

1. Design a rotating schedule for all staff to have team planning time at least twice per month.
2. Design and implement a schedule for principals and assistant principals to teach a minimum of one class per week.
3. Design and implement a schedule of bimonthly meetings for parents and school personnel around issues related to integration.
4. Establish a committee for writing classroom placement guidelines.
5. Develop a "transition team" for each student currently in out-of-district placement. This team will design and implement an action plan for returning the student to the district.
6. Develop and implement a staff development plan which includes topics related to integration to be provided through workshops at least two times per year.
7. Interview and hire a part-time consultant to assist teachers at least once per month in strategies for individualizing curricula.
8. Develop and disseminate a booklet of suggestions for curriculum modification.
9. Deliver a presentation by the end of the current school year to the Board of Education regarding integration efforts and long-term needs.
10. Design and disseminate a needs assessment for all teachers and administrators on topics related to integration.

Sample Evaluation Objectives

1. Design and implement an attitude survey to be used with staff before the end of the current school year, and then to be repeated one year later.
2. Evaluate the rate of teacher absenteeism for two years prior to integration efforts and for two years following integration efforts.
3. Review a sample of individualized educational plans IEPs to evaluate the increase in the amount of time spent in regular education and the quantity of curriculum modifications recommended.
4. Monitor achievement test scores for regular education students in classes involved in integration efforts.
5. Observe a sampling of Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings to ascertain the effectiveness of the classroom placement guidelines in use.

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"All About Me" Books

> *"The single most effective way to help people overcome their prejudices about disabilities is by bringing people with and without disabilities together."*
>
> DOUGLAS BIKLEN

You have taken an important step—you have physically brought students with and without disabilities together. Now what? Obviously, physical integration is critical to any development of friendships between these students. But sometimes, physical integration is not enough. Many students with disabilities need some extra facilitation from an adult in order to get a friendship going. Facilitation is even more critical for students without traditional communication methods.

Friendship facilitation can start with this question: "What is it I look for in a friend?" The students' answers to questions are likely to include a sentiment similar to "someone with similar interests." Therefore, it can be extremely effective to help students with disabilities share information about themselves with other students. This can be as simple as helping students to identify their favorite food (usually McDonalds) or favorite television show. Once they know these things, they can be taught how to use this type of information to find friends with common interests. If initiating conversation is difficult for a student, the teacher can use this information to prompt two students into conversation (e.g., "Did you know that Steve's favorite TV show is Star Trek?").

For students without strong verbal abilities, a successful method can be the development of an "All About Me" book. The "All About Me" book (or whatever you title it) can be a scrapbook, a notebook, a photo album, or simply some paper stapled together. Depending upon the individual student, the book can include photographs of family and friends (with names and relationships noted), descriptions, symbols or photos of likes and dislikes, hobbies, or latest special experiences. It can be added to regularly by the student, by anyone reading it and wanting to respond, or by friends willing to share their latest adventures.

If the student with disabilities is participating in a regular education class, this book may be used as the basis for various projects. For example, if the class is studying geography, maps of trips or places lived may be included in the student's book. If the class is studying the value of money, information about recent purchases could be recorded. Ideas for subjects such as art, physical education, and English, for example, will come easily once the book is started. In addition, students without disabilities may also develop "All About Me" books. This is one more way to emphasize how different we all are and yet how alike.

Reference

Comegys, A. (1989). Integration strategies for parents of students with handicaps. In R. Gaylord-Ross (Ed.), *Integration strategies for students with handicaps*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Additional Resources

Fritz, M. (1990). A comparison of social interactions using a friendship awareness activity. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation, 25*(4), 352-359.

Strully, J. & Strully, C. (1992). The struggle toward inclusion and the fulfillment of friendship. In J. Nisbet (Ed.), *Natural supports in school, at work, and in the community for people with severe disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

5

Asking Students for Ideas

> *"Pretty much all the honest truth telling there is in the world is done by children."*
>
> Oliver Wendell Holmes

Stuck on figuring out how to include Johnny in an activity? Can't figure out why Sara isn't making friends? Ask your students for ideas! Students are a wonderful resource and are usually greatly underutilized. As a teacher you may feel that you should be able to solve each of the problems that comes along. But even if you could have all the answers, involving students in problem solving may result in a better answer and some help from them to make it work.

For example, a father once told a story about his teenage daughter, who happened to have severe disabilities. She wasn't making as many friends as he had hoped, so a meeting was called to discuss the problem. Teachers and students were asked for some solutions. Teachers offered complicated ideas about teaching specific communication skills, motor skills, etc. When the students were asked what to do about her lack of friends, they replied honestly, "She needs a new hairstyle, she needs new clothes." They could see, from a peer's perspective, what the adults could not see. What's the likelihood that adults alone would have arrived at those solutions?

Asking students for their ideas is a fairly simple strategy. However, there are several points to consider when phrasing a request:

1. **Age**—Students as young as five can have helpful ideas. However, the questions will have to be phrased very carefully in order to elicit possible solutions.

   For example, a group of 11-year olds could be asked, "What can we do to make all students feel more welcome and comfortable in our class?" Wheras a group of six-year olds might be asked, "What are some nice things we can do for new friends?"

2. **Group Size**—Problem solving can happen with a few students or with the whole class. However, the best discussions and ideas usually stem from small groups of four to six students.

3. **Appropriateness**—Students with disabilities may present some challenges which are not appropriate to discuss with peers (e.g., body odor, incontinence). By using your professional judgment you will easily recognize these topics.

6

Simulations

> *"There is something that is much more scarce, something finer far, something rarer than ability. It is the ability to recognize ability."*
>
> ELBERT HUBBARD

Simulating a disability can be an effective way to broaden students' acceptance and awareness about disabilities. However, there are two rules to keep in mind when using simulations. The first is that simulations should never focus only upon the limitations a person with a disability must face, but should also highlight the skills and strengths that a person may use to minimize their disability. Secondly, simulations should never be used as a "one-shot deal," but rather as a part of an ongoing disability awareness curriculum. As one-shot sessions, simulations can be fun and eye opening, but will not be sufficient to bring about long lasting attitudinal change.

The "Jelly Juggle" simulation can be used with students of all ages, but is best for first through fifth graders. Materials to be used include a roll of masking tape, plastic knives (one per group), a jar of jelly with the lid (one per group), one napkin per student, and one cracker per student.

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four students and distribute all the materials except the masking tape.
2. Direct the students to hold out their dominant hand ("the one you write with") so that you can lightly wrap one piece of masking tape around their fingers. The tape will serve as a reminder to them that they are not allowed to use that hand.

3. Taking turns, each student in each group is to unscrew the jelly jar lid and use his or her knife to spread jelly on a cracker. The other students in the group are to watch without giving help or hints. When finished, the student is to screw the lid back on the jar and pass it to the next student.
4. When all the students are finished (and cleaned up!), the teacher can lead a discussion with the following types of questions:
   - "How did you feel?" (e.g., frustrated, embarrassed, challenged)
   - "What strategies did you use?" (e.g., held jar between knees, used edge of desk)
   - "What strategies do you think people with a disabled arm might use?" (e.g., squeezable jelly containers, nonskid placemats, specially designed knives, help from a friend)

This simulation can be adapted in many ways, such as by using other foods, assigning other tasks, adding blindfolds, or having the group solve the problem. Students will enjoy the activity in almost any variation, and, as a part of an ongoing curriculum, will increase their awareness of disabilities.

Additional Resources

For more ideas on simulations, refer to:

Barnes, E., Berrigan, C., & Biklen, D. (1978). *What's the difference?* Syracuse, NY: Human Policy Press.

PACER Center. (1991). *Count me in: Resource manual on disabilities.* Minneapolis, MN: Author.

7

School Chores

> *"We haven't the time to take our time."*
>
> EUGENE IONESCO

How many times have you heard someone in your school say, "There just isn't enough time to do everything"? Or have you said it yourself? Because time is very precious in schools, teachers are beginning to find ways to cut back on more simple chores and, at the same time, offer all students practical learning opportunities.

In particular, chores provide students with disabilities many learning opportunities. Chores often require basic academic skills, such as reading and counting. They can also be used to teach students about responsibility and work behaviors. And, as importantly, they can be used as vehicles for allowing students to integrate into a variety of school environments and be seen by peers and adults as capable, helpful individuals.

The following chores have been successfully delegated to students with disabilities in many schools in Connecticut:

1. **Copying**—A box in the office is designated as the place for staff to put any copy work that needs to be done, along with pertinent directions. Students then copy the material and place it in the "customer's" mailbox.
2. **Mail Delivery**—Large envelopes are marked with teachers' names and room numbers. The student takes mail from a mailbox and places it in the corresponding envelope. Envelopes are then delivered to the classrooms. Students can be taught to enter quietly and place the envelope

in a predetermined location. At the end of the day the teachers return the envelopes to a designated location in the office.

3. **Pencil Sharpening**—This chore can be particularly helpful at test taking times. A teacher can deposit dull pencils in a marked envelope and leave it in the office. A student needing to practice fine motor skills can use either an electric or manual sharpener to sharpen the pencils and then return them to the teacher.
4. **Watering plants**—Many classrooms and school spaces have plants for decoration. Teachers can be asked to sign up for weekly or biweekly plant watering services (depending on the plant!). Students are taught how much water to give various sized plants and may even be taught how to remove dead leaves or blossoms.

Some students may need assistance performing these or other chores. The best way to provide this assistance is to involve peer helpers from the students' classes or higher grade levels. If this isn't possible, special education staff may be available to assist.

8

Disability Quiz

> *"Handicapism refers to the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination that society practices toward people who have disabilities."*
>
> BARNES, BERRIGAN, & BIKLEN

Children often adopt myths about people with disabilities. These myths may be fostered by stereotypes presented by adults, or by creative design due to a lack of knowledge. Whatever the reason, teachers need to assess the level of accurate knowledge children have about disabilities and then provide activities to increase it.

A disability quiz is a simple strategy which can be used by teachers at any grade level. The following quiz, included in *What's the Difference* (Barnes, Berrigan, & Biklen, 1978) is an excellent example of a well-designed quiz.

Disability Quiz

1. Is a person with a disability usually sick?
2. Can a person who is blind go to the store?
3. If someone can't talk, do you think he or she is retarded?
4. Were people with disabilities born that way?
5. Do you feel sorry for someone who's disabled?
6. Can blind people hear the same as other people?
7. If a person is retarded, does it mean that he or she will never grow up?
8. Are all deaf people alike?
9. Can a person in a wheelchair be a teacher?
10. Do all children have the right to go to your school?

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Each of the questions in this quiz assesses different types of common myths, and allows the teacher the opportunity to discuss them. For example, question #2, "Can a person who is blind go to the store?", addresses the myth that people with disabilities can not be independent. Question #3, "If someone can't talk, do you think he or she is retarded?", addresses the myth that if people have one disability, they automatically have others.

The teacher asks the students to answer all the questions independently and then discusses each question and the correct answer. Depending upon the ability level of the class, the teacher can add other related information (e.g., mobility strategies for people who are visually impaired).

If this quiz is not written at the reading level you need, it can be adjusted fairly easily. You can also design your own! If you choose this route, the following procedure may make your writing easier:

1. Make a list of the misconceptions/myths you would like to dispel (e.g., people with disabilities are different and want others to always help them).
2. Write two or three questions for each misconception. Then test them out on a friend or a selected student.
3. Choose the best question for each misconception and write it in a quiz format.
4. Always include a "don't know" or "unsure" category for students to check.

Additional Resource

For more information, check out:

Barnes, E., Berrigan, C., & Biklen, D. (1978). *What's the difference? Teaching positive attitudes toward people with disabilities.* Syracuse, NY: Human Policy Press.

9

Passing Out "Stuff"

> *"Ability is of little account without opportunity."*
>
> NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Every day, across the country, millions of papers, books, tests, and other materials are passed out to students. It happens so often that we don't even pay much notice to this "passing" activity. But because of its frequency, it is a wonderful activity in which many students with disabilities can participate. And because of its simplicity, it usually requires no extra work for the teacher!

Benefits include:

- The student with disabilities moves around the classroom and interacts with his or her peers.
- The student sees himself or herself, and is seen by peers, as capable of helping others.
- The student has an opportunity to apply knowledge of one-to-one correspondence, name recognition and recall, counting, and other academic skills in a practical way.
- The student can practice fine and gross motor skills to their level of ability (e.g., a student in a wheelchair with severe arm contractions can stretch his or her arm to hand out papers).
- The teacher does not waste time passing out papers and materials.

This strategy can easily be individualized so that it is appropriate for almost any student. When designing the plan for the student, the teacher should consider the amount of time it will take the student to pass out things (e.g., perhaps he or she should only pass to one row), how frequently he or she should pass out materials, what types of things he or she can be expected to pass out successfully (e.g., books may be easier to grab than papers), and if he or she will need any assistance (from the teacher, a paraeducator, or peers).

10

Work Folders

I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But I can still do something.
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the something I can do.
EDWARD EVERETT

A teacher's main concern regarding a student with a disability is often, "What academic work is this student supposed to do?" While the majority of time the goal will be for the student to do the work his or her peers are doing, with modifications, occasionally the student may need other work to do (e.g., during testing or when the disparity between work and ability level is too great). An individualized work folder is an excellent tool for use during these times.

The work folder can be a manilla folder, three-ring binder, or simply a large piece of construction paper folded in half. The classroom teacher can collaborate with the special education teacher to choose the type of work papers to be include in the folder. Work papers should be chosen from all of the different subject areas (e.g., math, reading, geography). These papers can then be placed in the folder and updated on a regular basis (daily if used daily, weekly if used infrequently). When the teacher feels the student cannot participate directly in the work the rest of the class is doing, he or she can direct the student to use his or her work folder. Whenever possible, the student should be encouraged to work on assignments that are in the same subject area as that of the peers (e.g., math work during math period).

The work folder can be carried from class to class if the student changes classes, or multiple folders can be designed to be left in each of the student's classrooms.

For students whose instructional objectives include manipulative objects rather than paper tasks, a work box can be set up following the same guidelines. It might include math manipulatives, clay, audio cassette tapes, three dimensional shapes, or anything else required to address the student's objectives.

This strategy can also be applicable to other students in the class. Many teachers choose for all students to have work folders for unfinished work papers. By doing this, all students are given an organizational tool and the perceived differences between students are decreased.

11

Conversation Books

"A picture is worth a thousand words."

CHINESE PROVERB

Many students with disabilities have difficulty conversing with their peers. This may be due to poor articulation skills, shyness about initiating conversation, or difficulty deciding what to talk about. Whatever the reason, the student may benefit from the strategy of using a conversation book. In addition, this idea may be of great help to other students in your class who wish to converse with a student with disabilities but are not quite sure of what to say.

The conversation book can be handmade from scratch paper, but is best designed using a ready made, small photo album (wallet-sized are best). The teacher, working with the student and parents, collects various photographs of people, places, or things that are important to the student. Especially helpful are current pictures of activities the student may be involved with outside of school, such as playing softball or a vacation at Disneyworld. Also of interest to students are photos which represent favorite T.V. shows or video games. Once collected, the photos are placed in the conversation book and are updated as frequently as possible (once per week for some of the photos).

The next step is to instruct the student in the best ways to use the book. For example, the student may be taught that when he or she would like to talk with others, he or she should pull the book out of his or her pocket and show a picture. When possible, the student should attempt to use some speech in conjunction with the photos. The book should accompany the student at any times when social conversation is encouraged, such as recess or lunch.

Other students in the class should also be taught how to help make the most of the conversation book. For example, students may need to be taught that conversation involves turn taking, rather than just commenting. Therefore, if the student with the conversation book shows a picture, other students can comment, then ask a question and wait for a verbal or picture response. They may also be taught how to prompt further conversation with statements or questions such as, "What did you do next?" or "Which is your favorite?" or "Show me . . . ."

This process and the expectations can be modified to meet the needs of a wide variety of students. If the student is currently receiving speech/language therapy services, you may wish to ask the therapist for his or her help in determining the best design for your student.

12

Guest Reader

> *"I am here to live out loud."*
>
> EMILE ZOLA

One of the common challenges of integrating children with disabilities is addressing their reading skills. For students with the potential to be readers, although perhaps not at the same level as their peers without disabilities, teachers often struggle in trying to find enough opportunities for the students to practice reading.

A third grade teacher in Connecticut solved this problem easily. Her student was reading in the first grade reader fairly successfully, but needed as much practice as possible. The teacher collaborated with the kindergarten teacher to arrange for the student to be a guest reader in the kindergarten class. The student went into the kindergarten class several times per week with a book selected by her teacher and read aloud to a small group of children. This activity allowed for her to have extra reading practice and also proved beneficial for her self-esteem.

This strategy can also be used for many older students who are not reading on grade level. As long as they can effectively read material on a lower level, they can serve as guest readers to younger children.

13

Curricular Infusion

"We need to develop in our regular education schools and classrooms a sense of community; a belief that everyone belongs, is welcomed, and has gifts and talents to offer."

MARSHA FOREST

Although a "big word," curricular infusion is really a simple concept. It refers to the ongoing, systematic inclusion of disability information in the context of the regular curriculum. Because of its longitudinal nature, curricular infusion is a process which is much more likely to bring about attitudinal and behavioral change than one-time special activities.

Examples of areas in which disability information could be infused include:

- **History**—Civil Rights movement; development of public education; Hitler's policies; Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- **Science**—senses (eyes and ears); technology (TTYs, adapted devices, computers); genetics, muscular system; the brain; architectural accessibility.
- **Industrial Arts**—adapted devices; architectural accessibility.
- **English/Reading**—biographies; stories including children with disabilities; alternative methods of communication.
- **Music**—Beethoven; Izak Perlman; Stevie Wonder; Ray Charles; sound and hearing.
- **Writing**—essay assignments on the topics of friendships, differences, abilities; use of computers.

Many school personnel can be very helpful with curricular infusion projects. Your school librarian may be helpful in finding appropriate fiction and non-fiction books for your students. In addition, upper level teachers (grades five and six) often specialize in certain topics, especially if students in these grades switch classes. If so, these teachers will probably be able to brainstorm other ways to infuse disability information into a specific subject area. If you are one of these specialists, then you may wish to share some ideas with teachers at lower grade levels (directly or indirectly, through bulletin boards and displays, for example).

Additional Resource

Sapon-Shevin, M. (1992). Celebrating diversity, creating community. In S. Stainback and W. Stainback (Eds.), *Curriculum considerations in inclusive classrooms: Facilitating learning for all students.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

14

Communication Log Books

> *The average person spends at least 13 years of his life talking. On a normal day about 18,000 words are likely to be used—roughly the equivalent of a book of 54 pages.*
>
> UNKNOWN

Students with disabilities usually have many different adults interacting with them throughout the week. One student in an elementary school may see his or her classroom teacher, special education teacher, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, music, art, and physical education teachers, and a paraeducator. Add to this list Mom and Dad and you have 11 adults playing a significant role in the life of this child. At the secondary level, the number grows quickly as more classroom teachers are added to the list. The fact is, finding time for communication among so many adults will be challenging.

To assist staff and parents in their communication efforts, many schools are using communication log books. These logs can be small notepads or larger spiral notebooks marked with the student's name. A central place is chosen, usually in the regular education classroom, where the book is kept and readily accessible. Whenever an adult works with the student and has a question for another adult or information to provide, it is written in the log book. For example, the speech therapist, when working in the classroom, notices that a certain activity would lend itself well to the student's speech objectives. Rather than interrupting the teacher during class, the therapist can make a note in the log book. Log books are even more helpful for people whose paths rarely cross, (e.g., physical therapist and speech therapist). Through this tool they can communicate more easily about the student's needs and progress.

Log books are also helpful as a tool for remembering to ask a question. Have you ever thought of something you'd like to ask one of the specialists, only to forget it the next time you see them? Writing it down right away in the log book will increase the likelihood that you'll get the information you need. And this means a better program for the student.

15

Working With Paraeducators

> *"Can we ever have too much of a good thing?"*
>
> MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

Classroom teachers who include students with disabilities are often assigned paraeducators, or teacher aides, to help in the classroom. An extra pair of hands can sound like a dream to many teachers, however, these relationships are sometimes difficult. Why? Many different factors may be at work.

Most teachers entered teaching without expecting to be supervising another adult. Most teachers have never been given any training in how to supervise, so it can be an uncomfortable experience. Also, some teachers enjoy the solitary nature of their position (solitary except for about 30 students!). When a teacher and a paraeducator work together in a fairly small space, teamwork is necessary. But different styles of teaching, interacting, and communicating can cause the team to be dysfunctional.

Finally, a paraeducator is often hired to work with a specific student with a disability. When this is the case, the teacher and the paraeducator can be confused about their ability to expand this role to other students. Either person may become defensive about this expansion.

To make the most of this wonderful resource which has been bestowed upon you, consider meeting with your paraeducator as soon as he or she begins working with you to discuss the following items (Even if you've been working together for years, a meeting like this might still be helpful!):

- Your philosophy of education.
- Your rules for the classroom and discipline policy.
- Your objectives for your class for the year.
- Your teaching style and your paraeducator's style.
- Your view of the paraeducator's role and responsibilities.
- The paraeducator's view of his or her role and responsibilities.
- Strengths the paraeducator can offer you and the class.
- A plan for an ongoing means of communication about problems, questions, etc.
- Review of the evaluation criteria for the paraeducator.
- Planned training for the paraeducator and identification of any additional training needed.
- The classroom schedule/routine.
- The needs of the student(s) with disabilities and how to best meet them.
- A signaling system for when things go awry and immediate discussion is not possible.
- Other professionals (e.g., Occupational, Physical, and Speech Therapists) and their roles.
- School-wide policies that the paraeducator may need to know.
- Educational jargon with which the paraeducator may need to be familiar.
- Other:

Additional Resources

For more information about paraeducators, try these sources:

Fimian, M.J., Fafard, M., & Howell, K.W. (1984). *A teacher's guide to human resources in special education: Paraeducators, volunteers, and peer tutors.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

National Resource Center for Paraeducators in Special Education at the City University of New York.

The paraeducator connection (a newsletter). Available from Sam Mule, 1830 Bald Eagle Lane, Eagle River, WI 54521.

16

Environment Checklist

> *"Where there is great love there are always miracles. Miracles rest not so much upon faces or voices or healing power coming from far off, but on our perceptions being made finer, so that for a moment our eyes can see, and our ears can hear what there is about us always."*
>
> WILLA CATHER

One of the exciting things about any school is the diversity you will see in classrooms—human diversity and physical diversity. Each teacher decorates and arranges his or her room a bit differently from the neighboring teacher, and, in so doing, says something about who he or she and his or her students are.

Most of the time, if a student with a disability joins a class, the physical environment will need no special attention. However, for some students, slight adjustments in the classroom environment might make life easier and more pleasant for all involved.

The following Environment Checklist may be helpful in evaluating your classroom. In each of the areas (lighting, noise, temperature, and room layout), questions about the situation are provided, along with several ideas used successfully by other classroom teachers. Be sure to record your own ideas in the spaces provided so that you can refer to them in the future and share them with others.

Environment Checklist

Lighting
- Is it too much or too little?
- Is the light directed enough for the student?
- Is the light distracting?

Ideas to consider: placing the child closer to the window, further away, or with her back to the window; using curtains or blinds which can be adjusted; using a "book light" (battery operated) which attaches to his or her material; using lamps for softer effects; using a partition to shield the student from direct light; varying wall paint color/gloss; tinting windows; dimmer light switches.

Other ideas:

Noise
- Is it too much or too little?
- Do specific noises (e.g., screaming, bells, footsteps in the hallway) bother the student?

Ideas to consider: moving the student to a quieter area of the room; allowing the use of Walkmans for music or ear plugs for quiet; changing student groupings to change the noise level; muffling sound with carpeting and/or drapes; keeping the hallway door closed; forewarning the student to expect loud noises; placing pads on feet of chair legs; regulating loud speaker announcements.

Other ideas:

Temperature
- Is it too warm or too cool?
- Does the temperature in the room fluctuate?
- Does the student's temperature fluctuate?

Ideas to consider: asking the student to keep a spare sweater at school; recommending specific changes in clothing style; placing the student near or far from the heating element; placing the student near a window with permission to open/close it; allowing fresh air breaks; allowing cool drinks; making paper fans for student use.

Other Ideas:

Room Layout

- Is it conducive to the specific child as well as the group?
- Does it facilitate physical integration of all students?
- Does it allow easy access between the teacher and the student?
- Is the room accessible and safe for a child in a wheelchair? A child with a visual impairment using a cane? A child with crutches?

Ideas to consider: trying to simulate the disability, moving around the room looking for problem areas; using rows of desks, groups of desks, or tables instead of desks; using learning corners or carrels; using cushioned or bean bag chairs; using pillows; asking the physical therapist for help evaluating the layout and the furniture; adjusting the level of things on walls or shelves; use of lap desks; asking the student to identify problem areas or things which might help.

Other ideas:

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17

Organizational Tools

"Pandemonium did not reign; it poured."
JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

Recently a friend of mine started his own business as a "professional organizer." Did you know there was such a career? As a matter of fact, there is also an organization called the National Association of Professional Organizers! At first this information really surprised me, until I thought about how so many of us have our disorganized moments and could really benefit from this service.

Students with disabilities can also be disorganized and benefit from some tools to organize their work, thoughts, and days. Two effective organizational tools for students include color-coding and symbol labeling.

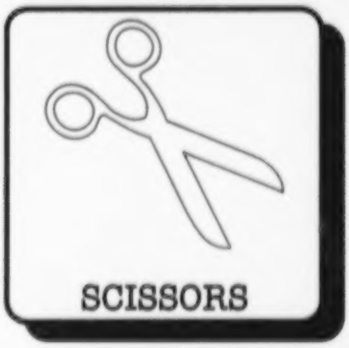
The use of color-coding is effective for many students with disabilities because if requires only the minimal ability of being able to match colors. Higher levels of color-coding can utilize children's ability to identify colors by name, but many things can be done without this skill. The following strategies may help organize your student(s):

- Color-code each period of your day and use these colors on the daily schedule (see Strategy #42). For example, Math is red, Science is green, Reading is yellow, Lunch is brown, etc.
- Match work folder colors (see Strategy #10) or work boxes by the period color. For example, the math folder would be red and the math box holding manipulatives would either be red or marked red in some obvious way.

- Use colored paper for work pages and match the colors to the appropriate period.
- Use colored markers or crayons to mark white papers with a dot to correspond to the appropriate period. For example, the student would look for work pages with yellow dots during reading class. Colored "sticky dots" (available at office supply stores) also work very well.
- Reinforce the color-coding system by allowing the students to use a colored pencil, crayon, or marker to do their work. For example, the students could write their names on their science projects with a green marker.

Symbol labeling is a simple strategy which can incorporate color-coding. Its purpose is to help students who lack reading, long-term memory, and organizational skills to know where to put items and belongings.

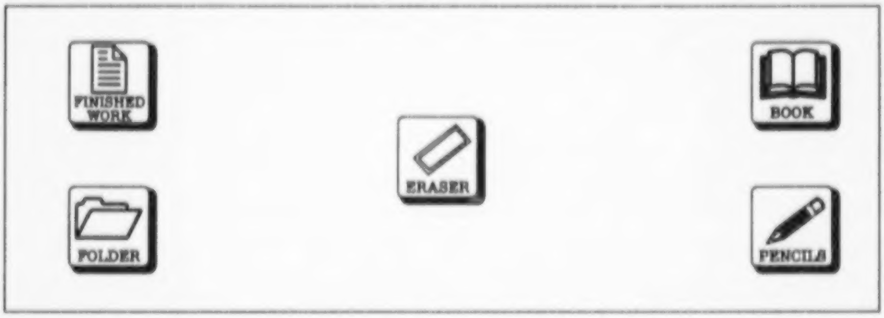
A symbol is usually a black and white line drawing which represents a word. Symbols can be hand designed or purchased from companies such as Mayer-Johnson. Often, speech therapists have predesigned symbols available for student use. In addition, many computer graphics programs have symbols which can be printed out and used. Symbols can be of varying sizes, depending upon the eyesight of the children, but are usually 2" square, and have the word printed below the symbol (especially for the beginning sight work reader). Each symbol can be color-coded to match the color for the subject period.



For this strategy, symbols for the following words might be helpful:

- Book
- Pencils/pens
- Work box
- Finished work
- Crayons
- Coat
- Folder
- Eraser
- Lunch box/bag
- Notebook
- Scissors
- Book bag

After collecting the symbols appropriate to the student, tape the squares at locations where the items usually belong. For example, if a child's desk top opens, the inside of the desk might look like this:



After posting the symbols in appropriate locations, cue the children to the symbols whenever getting or putting materials away, until the children make the connection and can begin to organize themselves.

Additional Resource

Obtain commercially produced symbols from:

Mayer-Johnson Co.
Solana Beach, CA 92075-1579
(619) 550-0084

18

Peer Tutoring

> *"I get by with a little help from my friends."*
>
> THE BEATLES

Teachers have long recognized the benefits of using students to help each other with learning. These benefits, increased learning for both the tutor and the student, increased self-esteem, full utilization of available resources, and greater flexibility of time for the teacher, are no different when we talk about using peer tutoring with students with disabilities. However, these benefits only come when the peer tutoring program is structured and implemented effectively. To accomplish this, a teacher should consider the following components of a good peer tutoring program: recruitment and selection, training, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Recruitment and Selection

When recruiting peer tutors, consider students in your own class, in other same-grade classes, or students from higher grades (known as cross-age tutoring). Be sure to also consider students with disabilities as peer tutors. They, too, have much to offer other students. Any interested students should be given as much information as possible **before** they make a commitment, so that they fully understand the time and tasks involved. When selecting out of an interested group of students, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the student willing to participate? (Peer tutoring should always be voluntary.)
- Can the student follow teacher directions well, and at the same time not be too dependent on lots of direction?

- Does the student have the skill or knowledge base necessary to teach another student?
- Does the student have the time in his or her schedule to tutor, without distracting from other school objectives?
- Will there be an effective match between the two students' personalities?

Training

Once you have selected your peer tutor, some amount of training will be necessary before he or she begins tutoring. As the tutor may be instructing in several different topic areas, the most important training to come first should be on good instructional techniques. Topics to be covered include:

- How to hold the student's interest.
- How to orient the student to the lesson or activity.
- How to offer the least intrusive prompts first before moving to greater amounts of help.
- How to offer simple directions.
- How to reinforce correct responses from the student.
- How to correct incorrect responses.

After covering these basic instructional principles, you can then teach the tutor specific strategies for working with a specific student, and specific strategies for teaching specific materials or skills.

The training of a peer tutor can be accomplished in several ways. To begin with, you may want to sit down with the tutor and review the above points. Following this, you may want to model the instruction with the student who will be receiving the tutoring. You will then want to watch the tutor as the two students practice their instruction, so as to provide feedback for improvement. Finally, you may wish to provide the tutor with a "Helpful Hints" booklet which he or she can refer to on his or her own (see Strategy #19).

Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

The last phase of any good peer tutoring program involves designing and implementing a system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of student progress and of the tutoring relationship. Both of these components are important because it can happen that the student will be learning, but that the relationship between the tutor and the student is not as positive as you would like it, or vice versa.

Several methods can be used to evaluate tutoring activities. To start with, your tutor can collect some data on the student's progress (after being taught how to do so). You can perform a spot check with the student on an occasional basis. Observations of the tutoring should be done on a frequent basis at first, and on an occasional basis for as long as the relationship continues. Finally, you can interview both participants (separately) to ascertain how they feel about the tutoring.

Additional Resources

For more information on peer tutoring, consult:

Certo, N., Harring, N., & York, R. (Eds.). (1984). *Integration of severely handicapped students.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Fimian, M., Fafard, M., & Howell, K. (1984). *A teacher's guide to human resources in special education: Paraeducators, volunteers, and peer tutors.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Gaylord-Ross, R. (1989). *Integration strategies for students with handicaps.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Stainback, S. & Stainback, W. (1985). *Integration of students with severe handicaps in regular schools.* Reston, VA: CEC.

19

Helpful Hints for Peer Tutors

> *"Performing a task in the presence of others can under certain conditions create anxiety and apprehension and under different conditions inspire and energize."*
>
> DAVID & FRANK JOHNSON

After developing your peer tutoring program, you may wish to design a "Helpful Hints" booklet for the tutors. This will reinforce the information you have given them in their training (see Strategy #18), and decrease the time you need to spend responding to their questions.

There are several ways to go about designing this type of booklet. The easiest may be to ask someone else to do it for you! People you may consider asking include the special education teacher, a qualified paraeducator or parent volunteer, or an English teacher who may assign it as a class project. Of course, if someone else designs it, the booklet may not include all of the helpful hints that are applicable to your class, so you may need to add some information yourself.

Another option is to ask your peer tutors to help you design a booklet. This can work very well because the tutors can identify most accurately the type of information they needed when they began tutoring. If other teachers in the building use peer tutors, those students can also be polled for their opinions about what information should be included in the booklet.

If, instead, you decide to design it yourself, you may want to keep track of the questions your tutors ask you along the way. These questions can then be used to construct the information included in the booklet.

Many students respond well to a question and answer format. Following are several questions you may wish to include, with answers, in your booklet:

- How can I keep the student's attention?
- What should I do if I need to ask you a question and you look busy?
- Is it okay to ask other adults in the room for help if I get stuck?
- What if the student refuses to do the work (task, activity)?
- What if another student wants to join us?
- What should I do if I get frustrated?
- What should I do if the student gets mad or frustrated?
- Is it okay to have some fun while we're doing this?
- What should I do if I have an idea about how to teach the student that is different from what you've told me?
- What can I do if I'm getting distracted by other things happening around us?
- Can I skip a tutoring session if I feel like it?
- Can I give the student candy or presents if I want to?
- What should I do if I finish early?
- Other:

You may wish to design your booklet so that each question or topic is on a separate page. Then, if you choose to change one of the suggestions or answers, it is easy to update the booklet.

20

Scheduling for Inclusion

"This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Scheduling class participation for students with disabilities can be a very complicated task. Most of these students will need to have scheduled therapy sessions each week, often from as many as four different therapists. In addition, the students may be scheduled to have some one-on-one time with a special education teacher. Last, but not least, it is the school system's legal obligation to ensure that each of the student's IEP objectives are being addressed throughout the course of their school day or week.

In response to these often competing requirements, Bristol Public Schools, in Bristol, Connecticut designed a planning process which accomplishes several objectives. It provides an opportunity for the educational team (including parent) to plan out the daily schedule for a student in terms of **where** he or she will be. It also helps the team discuss and determine at **what level** the student will be participating in the class. Finally, it organizes the suggestions from the team as to **how** to address the student's IEP objectives within the classroom.

There are two different phases in this planning process, both of which involve all of the members of the educational team. The process, however, is usually organized by the special education teacher who is working with the student. Phase I results in the completion of the Planning Sheet (Form 1) and Phase II results in the completion of several Specific Activities Sheets (Form 2)—see the examples following.

Directions for Completing Form I

Keep in mind as you use this form that it is meant to be a **guideline** for the student's day, rather than an inflexible schedule. It is expected that there will be changes based upon student and staff variables, special events, etc. However, when designing it, try to do so with a typical day in mind.

1. List the IEP objectives in the left hand column.
2. Across the top row of boxes, list the separate activities or periods of the regular school day, beginning with arrival, including lunch, recess, "specials," study hall, or any other normal parts of the school routine. They do not need to be in exact chronological order, as some activities change from day to day. (See sample Form 1.)
3. As a team, look at the first IEP objective. Going across the row, decide in which activity, activities, or period(s) the objective will be addressed. Under those headings, shade the corresponding box with a highlighter. Continue this procedure for each of the objectives until finished. This will provide you with a picture of all the times throughout the day when the objective could be addressed.
4. Returning to the first objective, first row, decide in which shaded period(s) the objective will receive direct instruction. Write an "X" in these box(es).
5. In the bottom row, for each period, decide whether the student will be:
    a. Working in this period in basically the same way every other student is, with no significant modifications required. If so, write an "S" (for Same) in the box on the upper side of the diagonal line.
    b. Working in this period with modifications. If so, write an "M" (for Modified) on the upper side of the diagonal line.
    c. Better served in an alternative setting, because his or her objective cannot be addressed adequately in the regular classroom, or the regular activity has no value at all for the student. If so, write an "AL" (for Alternative Location) on the upper side of the diagonal line.
6. In each of these boxes, the group must then decide if the student will need assistance other than that the classroom teacher can provide. If so, on the lower half of the box, use the following code:

    p = peer   ad = aide   2ndA = second adult   no = no assistance

After completing this form, the team members can then work together to fill out the Specific Activities sheet.

FORM 1: Planning Sheet

Name: Mike Cunningham **School:** Wilde Middle **Grade:** 7

REGULAR CLASS ACTIVITIES/PERIODS

IEP OBJECTIVES	Arrival / HR	Math	Reading	Science	English	Lunch	History	Home Ec.	Music	Gym	IA	Art	Computer
Improve articulation	▨		x		x	▨		▨					
Fasten clothing, tie shoes	x									x			
Keep hands to self	x			▨		x		▨		▨	▨	▨	
Walk without stumbling	▨					▨		▨		x			
Say "No" to inapprop. pressure	▨					x							
Choose between 2 methods		▨		x				x				▨	
Increase initiation w/ peers	▨					▨		x				x	
Wk. coop. in assembly line task											x		
Increase attention to teacher		x	▨		▨		▨		x				
Increase sight words			x		x								
PARTICIPATION LEVEL	S no	M ad	M ad	M p	M ad	S no	AL 2ndA	M p	S no	M 2ndA	M p	M p	AL 2ndA

S = Same M = Modified AL = Alternative Location

p = peer ad = aide 2ndA = Second Adult no = no assistance

FORM 1: Planning Sheet

Name:

School:

Grade:

REGULAR CLASS ACTIVITIES/PERIODS

IEP OBJECTIVES													
PARTICIPATION LEVEL													

S = Same M = Modified AL = Alternative Location

p = peer ad = aide 2ndA = Second Adult no = no assistance

Directions for Completing Form II

For any period(s) which have been marked Modified or Alternative Location, complete a "Specific Activities Sheet" to describe the necessary modifications and/or strategies. This form can then be used by the classroom teacher and other staff working in the classroom to organize their instruction of the student.

1. List the period/regular class activity.
2. Circle the participation level.
3. List the objective(s) to be addressed, including mastery criteria.
4. Describe the specific strategies, steps, or activities to achieve the objective(s).
5. Describe the evaluation method to be used. (See sample Form 2.)
   - how often to collect data
   - what method to use to collect data
6. Use the evaluation code to show progress on this objective for each marking period.

   1 = Partial completion of objective
   2 = Half completion of objective
   3 = Objective mostly completed
   4 = Objective met, fully accomplished

FORM 2: Specific Activities Sheet

Student Name Mike Cunningham **Dates From:** 5/94

To: 5/95

Goal Implementors Mrs. Jackson (special education), Mr. Brown (science)

Regular Class Activity Science

Participation Level [✓ Modified] / Alternative Location

Objective(s):

Mike, given 2 different procedures or methods for solving a problem or activity, will choose one and follow it, making the choice within 30 seconds, 90% of the time.

Specific Activities to Achieve Objective(s):

- During lab set up, ask Mike to select correct materials
- During activities, show Mike/explain 2 different approaches and wait for Mike to choose.
- Use phrases like "Mike, choose 1"—Keep phrases simple
- Allow 10 seconds wait time, then repeat verbal prompt.
- When possible, let Mike choose between seats, work papers, writing implements, or "free time" activities

Evaluation:

Two days per week, for one choice-making opportunity, time and record the duration until Mike responds.

Goal—within 30 seconds, 90% of the time.

Evaluation Schedule Code:

1 = Partial 2 = Half 3 = Most 4 = Objective Accomplished

1st Marking Period	2nd Marking Period	3rd Marking Period	4th Marking Period
11/5/94 - 2	1/30/95 - 3		

Reference

Rainforth, B., York, J., & MacDonald, C. (1992). *Collaborative teams for students with severe disabilities.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

21

Helping Kids to Make Friends

"Friends never feel they must fix you."
ROBERT PERSKE

For most of us, friendships are such a natural part of our life that we don't ever stop to consider them. For instance, how would you define friendship? Why are friendships important? What makes a friendship? Should schools be in the business of helping students to make friends?

Friends are defined by Webster's Dictionary as "people attached to one another by affection or esteem." Of course, while a single definition may lead one to believe that all friendships are alike, we know that's not true. However, it is still possible to consider any of your students and easily answer the question, "Does he or she have any friends?"

Should schools be in the business of worrying about friendships? Well, if we look at the benefits of friendships, the answer is clear. Friends help us to grow and stretch beyond ourselves by offering us other points of view and experiences. Friends enhance our self-esteem by providing us with feedback about who we are. Friends help us to get through difficult times in our lives without as much stress as if we were on our own. These, and many other benefits, have direct impact upon learning within schools. This holds true for students with disabilities as well as for those without.However, friendship is not something that schools can force. True friendships happen only when two people have a reciprocal liking and the opportunity to spend time together.

But there are several things that can be done to facilitate friendship formation. Students with and without disabilities can be taught the skills needed for successful friendships. Stainback and Stainback (1987) identify these skills as a positive interaction style, the ability to establish areas of compatibility, to take the perspective of others, to share and provide support, to demonstrate trustworthiness and loyalty, and to resolve conflicts.

Be careful not to hover and be ever present when children hang out together. Thinking back to your youth, you will probably be able to remember how adult presence put a damper on your natural interactions. However, it can be very hard to back away from those students for whom, for so many years, one has felt a need to be protective. It is important to try. If you decide that the student really needs close supervision, you can still be present physically while at the same time remaining uninvolved, acting uninterested or busy with your own thoughts.

Comment positively on interactions between students with and without disabilities. All students need a little reinforcement now and then, and this may be especially true for students who are a little unsure of how to interact with someone with a disability.

Explain nontraditional communication systems. Many students with disabilities may not speak as your other students do. Whether it is through sign language, a communication board (a board with symbols for words), unclear speech, or body language, students can learn how to listen and understand. One speech therapist in Connecticut used her cafeteria duty times to teach all of the students sign language. When most of the students were finished with lunch, she would demonstrate a few signs and have the students practice. In addition, she had some of the students draw the signs onto poster boards which were then hung on the cafeteria walls.

Additional Resources

For more information on friendships:

Perske, R. (1988). *Circles of friends.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Strully, J. & Strully, C. (1992). The struggle toward inclusion and the fulfillment of friendship. In J. Nisbet (Ed.), *Natural supports in school, at work, and in the community for people with severe disabilities.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Reference

Stainback, W. & Stainback, S. (1987). Facilitating friendships. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation*, March, 18-24.

22

Learning Styles

> *"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away."*
>
> HENRY DAVID THOREAU

We now know that there are many different learning styles or approaches. Some of us learn best visually, while others learn best auditorily. Still others need to both hear and see material in order to learn it thoroughly. Learning styles can also vary according to factors such as:

- Temperature preference.
- Noise preference.
- Structure or organization.
- Preference for working alone or with others.
- Amount of direction.

Many of you may have taken a learning style assessment and learned about your preferred and most successful style. You may know that you are a "right brain thinker" or a "concrete sequential." These various labels stem from a number of different assessment tools in use today (see the additional resources). If you haven't yet taken one of these tests, find a way to do so. Knowing your own style will give you the ability to recognize how it affects your teaching and how well it matches with the needs and styles of your students.

Learning style is an important concept for children as well. First of all, it is virtually impossible for a teacher to correctly modify class activities for a student with a disability without knowing the student's dominant style. It is also impossible for a teacher to maximize learning opportunities for the whole class without knowing the various styles represented. Another benefit of learning styles assessment and identification is that it can help students understand their own strengths and capitalize on them when doing their work. Finally, this knowledge can help to increase children's sensitivity to and acceptance of students who are different because they begin to understand that all people learn differently and have individual strengths and weaknesses.

Because there are so many tools available to assess learning styles, it can be difficult to know which one to give your students. You may want to start by asking the special education teacher for his or her recommendations, as special education professionals have often had training in this area. In addition, review the October, 1990 issue of "Educational Leadership." This journal contains a thorough discussion of learning style tools, their advantages and disadvantages, and examples from practitioners. This and other sources are listed below.

Additional Resources

For more information on learning styles, see:

Educational Leadership, 48(2).

Carbo, M. (1983). *The reading style inventory.* Rosslyn Heights, NY: National Reading Styles Institute.

DeBoer, A. (1986). *The art of consulting.* Chicago: Arcturus Books.

Dunn, R. & Dunn, K. (1978). *Teaching students through their individual learning styles.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Dunn, R., Dunn, K., & Price, G.E. (1989). *Learning style inventory.* Lawrence, KS: Price Systems.

McCarthy, B. (1986). *The hemispheric mode indicator.* Barrington, IL: Excel.

Page, E.C. (1983). *Looking at type.* Gainesville, FL: Center for Applications of Psychological Type.

23

Cooperative Learning

> *"Two heads are better than one."*
>
> UNKNOWN

Cooperative learning, students working together to accomplish shared goals, is a concept that is rapidly taking hold in schools and classrooms across the country. If it hasn't yet in yours, there are several reasons why you should consider using cooperative learning activities.

The benefits of cooperative learning have been clear when applied to students with special needs in mainstream classes. But they also hold true for other students. Cooperative learning provides a constructive way for students who are different to work together. It increases student motivation to work. It allows students to experience higher levels of self-esteem because of their successes at working together and accomplishing their goals. And for the teacher, it provides a method for more easily meeting the needs of students who are heterogeneously grouped.

The process, as described by Johnson and Johnson (1986), is described following, along with special considerations for using cooperative learning with students with moderate and severe disabilities.

Process

1. Two types of objectives are specified before the lesson begins: an academic objective and a collaborative skills objective.

Special Considerations:
The student with disabilities may have different objectives in each of these areas than the rest of the group. Look over the IEP objectives before making this decision.

2. Groups are arranged by the teacher. Factors to consider include group size and group membership.

Special Considerations:
When beginning with cooperative learning, you may want to place the student with disabilities only with students who have demonstrated understanding and support for the student. However, it is unwise to always place the student with the same peers, as other students will miss out on many learning opportunities. If there is **more than one** student with disabilities in the class, these students should be equally divided throughout the groups, rather than clustered together.

3. The room is arranged to be conducive to group functioning.

Special Considerations:
Does the student with disabilities need a particular physical accommodation? If so, you may have already adapted one area of the room to meet his or her needs. In this case, try moving the other students around the room, while the student with disabilities stays in his or her seat, rather than trying to frequently rearrange the space to accommodate the student.

4. The lesson is structured to provide for individual accountability and intergroup cooperation (including assigned roles).

Special Considerations:
Students with disabilities should be assigned roles as well. These roles may need to be small, depending upon the abilities of the student (e.g., handing out/in papers). Although student roles normally change frequently, it may be better to let the student with disabilities maintain his or her role for a longer time period so that learning takes place. However, it is important to let the student experience as many different roles as possible.

5. The tasks are explained thoroughly to the students.

Special Considerations:
The student with disabilities should be expected to listen to the explanation of the task, even if he or she may not fully understand it. Following the classwide instruction, the teacher or paraeducator may need to provide further explanation to the student with disabilities. In addition, students in the group should be directed on how to assist the student with disabilities to participate in the task.

6. The teacher monitors the process and intervenes as necessary.

Special Considerations:
It can be easy for the student with disabilities to fall into the background in cooperative learning activities. The teacher or paraeducator must be aware of the level of the student's participation to ensure that the student's objectives will be addressed.

7. Individual and group learning is assessed, as well as group functioning.

Special Considerations:
The student with disabilities may be assessed on the group objectives, but should definitely be assessed on his or her specific IEP objectives. The special education teacher can be helpful in determining how and how often to do this.

Additional Resources

The following sources may be helpful for information on cooperative learning:

Chasnoff, R. (Ed.). (1979). *Structuring cooperative learning: The 1979 handbook.* New Brighton, MN: Interaction Book Company.

Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, F.P. (1987). *Joining together: Group theory and group skills.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, R.T. (1986). Mainstreaming and cooperative learning strategies. *Exceptional Children,* 52(6), 553-561.

24

Adapted Equipment

> *"We are continually faced by great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems."*
>
> ANDREW MATTHEWS

Whenever possible, it is best for students with disabilities to use the same furniture, equipment and materials as their nondisabled peers. But occasionally students will need to have specially adapted equipment. These adaptations may be as simple as a foot rest attached to a regular chair, a slanted desk top, or a clamp to hold papers in place. Or, they may be as complicated as electronic switch devices to activate tape recorders or adapted computer keyboards.

Unfortunately, in times of limited resources, one often tries to make do without the necessary adaptations. However, as some resourceful schools have found, this is not always necessary. If you need some adapted equipment, consider turning to your industrial arts or technology education departments. Most middle schools and high schools have the capacity to design and produce many basic adaptations. In addition, the new focus of technology education is to teach students about the entire technology process, from beginning to end, and how technology is related to the real world. So whether or not you know exactly what you want, your technology education department may be able to help you figure it out and provide it.

Before approaching your technology education teachers, you may want to consider the following points:

- Do you know exactly what you want? If so, can you show an example to replicate? A model will decrease the amount of miscommunication about the size, shape, etc.
- Have you asked for advice from the physical and/or occupational therapist? These professionals have much expertise with adaptive equipment and should assist in designing equipment for a student with disabilities.
- If students and/or teachers from the technology classes will be observing the student with disabilities prior to design or production, that student's parents should be informed. In addition to giving their consent for the project, they may be able to give you several design ideas.

If the technology teachers feel they cannot fit your request into their curriculum plans, find out if your high school has a Technology Student Organization (TSO). This type of project would be very appropriate for their extracurricular work. In addition, TSOs are nationwide, so if your school doesn't have one, try a neighboring district. Finally, if these avenues don't work for you, contact the local college or university and speak to the technology instructors there.

Additional Resources

For additional information about adapted equipment and technology for students with disabilities, try these sources:

Center for Special Education Technology, The Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, Virginia.

Dutton, D. & Dutton, D. (1990). Technology to support diverse needs in regular classes. In W. Stainback and S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support networks for inclusive schooling.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Technology and Disability Journal, Stoneham, MA, Andover Medical.

Worldwide Disability Solutions Group, Apple Computer, Inc.

25

Welcome to the School Store

"Born to Shop!"
UNKNOWN

Shopping is an integral part of our lives. While some of us enjoy it and others despise it, there is hardly anyone who is able to avoid it altogether. This will be true for your students as well. Shopping involves an amazing number of skills. Just some of these include money handling, computation, reading, labeling, comparing, communicating needs, social greetings, and carrying items. While some of these skills may be addressed in school curricula, most are not addressed to the extent that students with disabilities will need in order to be able to shop successfully.

So, how can you teach these functional skills and at the same time maximize integration with nondisabled peers? Consider opening a school store. School stores provide unlimited opportunities to teach functional skills to whichever students may need them, and can provide intense, one-to-one interactions between "coworkers," as well as brief social interactions between the "worker" and "customers."

Opening and running a school store can be simple or complicated, depending on how extensive you want it to be. Consider the following points when making your plans:

- **Location**—Many teachers operate the school store out of their classrooms. However, if you are tight on space, you may wish to ask the administration if there is a small space in the office or in a storage closet which you could use. Be sure to consider the accessibility of the location (i.e., can the student get to the store without difficulty along the way? Can the student get in and out of the space with enough room to maneuver?).

- **Size**—The size of your store will depend upon the amount of work you want to put into it and your resources for startup costs. Many grocery stores will gladly donate some small items if asked. You may also choose to sell only one item, such as pencils, particularly if the school already has a store that sells other things. This will be much more manageable, but provides fewer learning opportunities.
- **Operating Hours**—Most stores have limited operating hours, such as on Mondays and Wednesdays before school, but some school stores allow students to stop by at any time. Decide what will work best for you and your students.
- **Stock**—What will you sell? School supplies are always helpful, but there are other options too. Consider newspapers, magazines, crossword puzzle books, breakfast muffins, healthy or not so healthy snacks, stickers, greeting cards, flash cards, learning games, art projects made by students, or tickets to school events.
- **Money Handling**—Depending upon the size of your school store, there may be a fair amount of money being exchanged. Whenever possible, the students should handle the money themselves so that they have the experience of learning to do it correctly. However, to insure that you don't lose out, you may wish to have a very capable money handler oversee students who are learning, or you may wish to be present during store operating hours.
- **"Employees"**—Working at a school store is a great educational experience for students with disabilities. However, they will learn much more if paired with a nondisabled peer. Usually, having just a few steady employees works best. However, if you would like more students to have the experience, be sure to allow them enough time on the job to learn the basics before rotating them off. In addition, remember that you may need to give them suggestions on how best to help the student with disabilities, without doing too much for him or her.
- **Management**—Running a school store can take a lot of time or just a few minutes, depending upon the scope of the store. If you are worried about finding the time it will take, think about asking for help. Good sources of help include the special education teacher, physical, occupational, or speech therapists, parent volunteers (individually or through the PTA), cafeteria personnel, or a high school club (especially if store hours are at the end of the day). If you have other people assist you, remember that they may need some training and suggestions for working with any students with disabilities.
- **Profit**—Now for the best question of all—what do you do with the profit? Many teachers reinvest it in stock, but hopefully you will have some extra, over and above what you need for stock. You may consider paying a small salary to the students who have worked at the store. This provides them with many more new learning opportunities. Or you may wish to throw the class a party or provide some other treat for them. Finally, you might

want to purchase some learning materials that you could not otherwise afford to buy for your class or the school.

For more information or support materials, you may wish to talk to your special education teacher. He or she is likely to have workbooks and other learning materials with a functional focus, such as shopping and money handling. These materials could be used to supplement your instruction for the student with disabilities, as well as other students who need some extra work in this area.

26

Circles of Friends

> *"Circles of friends are not an alternative to learning. They are a precondition."*
>
> MARSHA FOREST

When children first meet a person with a disability, they are often not sure how to act. The same holds true for teachers. The "Circle of Friends" concept, developed by Marsha Forest, was designed to provide students with an initial structure for understanding peers with disabilities and knowing how to interact with them. The activity is most effective when a student first joins a class, but can be used later if there seems to be difficulty getting peers to become involved with the student with disabilities.

To start a Circle of Friends around a student, follow these steps:

1. Distribute to all the students in the class a piece of paper which has four circles on it, such as the example provided following.
2. Draw the same set of circles on the blackboard.
3. Direct the students to write in the center circle the names of people who are very dear to them, the names of people they love very much. Give them your own examples on the blackboard, such as: Mom, my sister Barbara. Usually this circle will have only a few names. Discuss the children's selections and why these people are important to them.
4. For the second circle, direct the students to write the names of people who are special to them, but not quite as close as those in the first circle. Give them your own examples on the blackboard, such as: Aunt Jane,

Grandpa, my best friend Tom. Discuss the children's selections and why these people are important to them.

5. Direct the students to write in the third circle the names of other people they do things with, such as friends or additional family members. Share your own examples on the blackboard, and discuss their selections.
6. In the outer circle, direct the students to write the names of people who are paid to be in their lives. Share your own examples, such as: doctors, coworkers. Discuss these kinds of relationships briefly.
7. When all the students have completed their circle of friends, discuss with the class what it might be like if their circle was not so full. Questions you might ask include:
    - How do you think it would feel if your third circle was empty?
    - Can you think of a time when your circle was not very full?
    - How do you think it would feel if your fourth circle was overflowing? (This is very common for people with disabilities.)
8. At this point, inform the students that a new student will be joining their class, and you would like for him or her to have a very full circle right from the beginning. Ask the students for suggestions on how they might be able to become friends. Ideas may include:
    - Phone trees so that a different student calls each night.
    - Recess buddies.
    - Lunch companions.
    - Greeters in the morning.
    - Helping to introduce the child to other children in the school.
9. Then structure some of these ideas so that students volunteer for a responsibility for a short period of time. The time period may be for a few weeks or a month at the most, as the hope is that the support will begin to take place naturally and will not have to be continually structured.

One caution about using this activity—it should be presented in such a way that it doesn't make the student with disabilities seem pathetic and not worthy of friends. The goal is not to have peers feel sorry for this "poor little child," but to understand that at times in our lives we may all need some extra friends. This message can be very clear if you are sensitive to it as you present the activity.

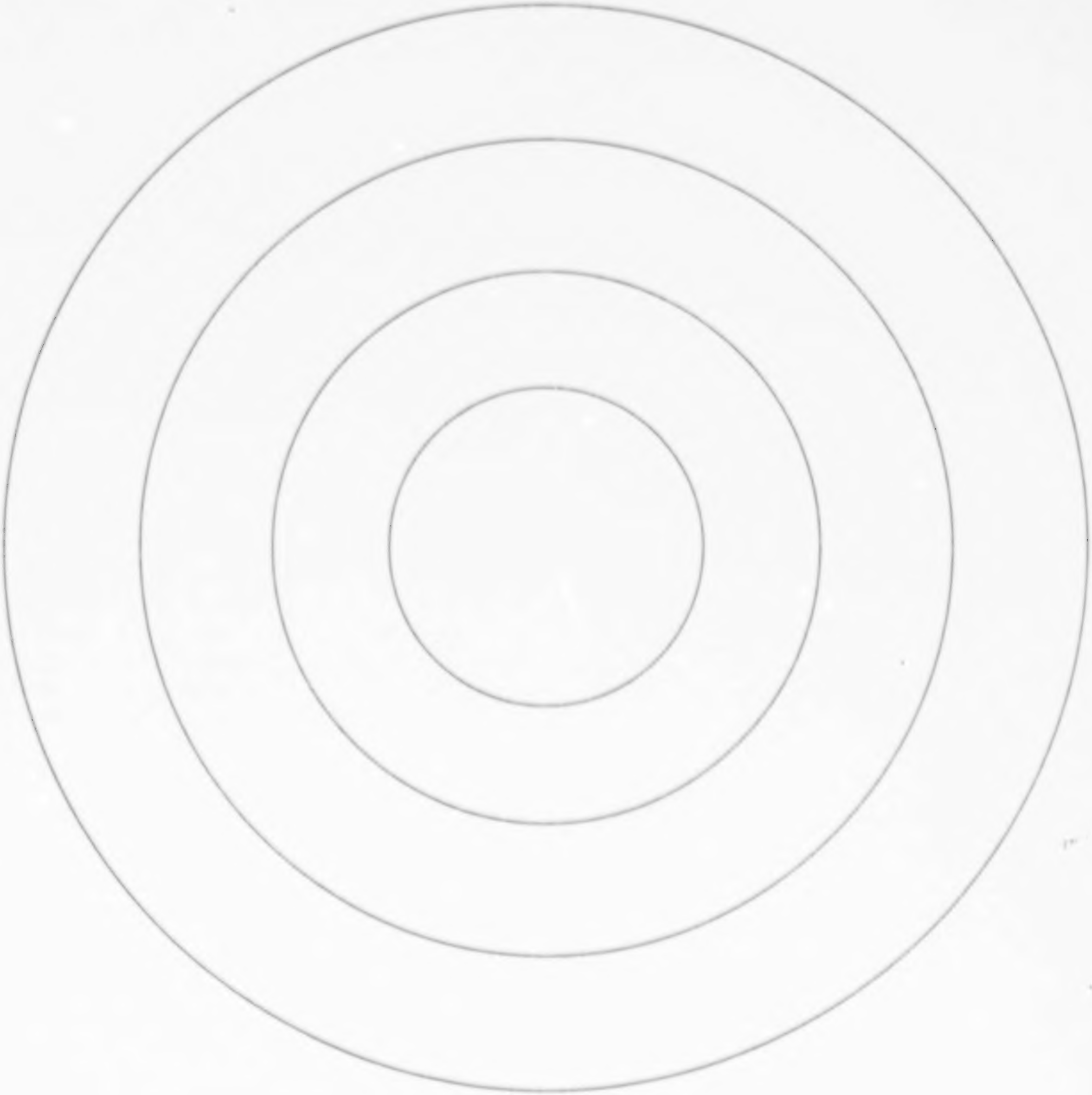
Additional Resources

For additional information on building Circles of Friends, refer to:

Forest, M. & Lusthaus, E. (1989). Promoting educational equality for all students. In S. Stainback, W. Stainback, and M. Forest (Eds.), *Educating all students in the mainstream of regular education* (pp. 43-57). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Perske, R. (1988). *Circles of friends.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Circles of Friends Activity



27

Natural Proportions

"People are to be taken in small doses."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Have you ever been sitting in a fast food restaurant, looking out the window, when you see a big yellow school bus, filled with small children, pull up outside? When this happens to me, my typical reaction is to eat a little faster so I can clear out. It's not that six-year olds aren't wonderful, but that they tend to be wonderful in smaller doses.

There is a piece of educational jargon which refers to this phenomenon, and that is "natural proportions." This term refers to the fact that certain types of people appear in our population in certain proportions, and when their presence in an activity or location far exceeds their natural proportion, it can become uncomfortable and ineffective.

This holds true for students with disabilities as part of school activities as well. In general, the percentage of people with disabilities, of any kind, in our society is estimated to be between 10% and 15%. Therefore, in a school of 400 students, a natural proportion of students with disabilities, of any kind, would be approximately 50. In a class of 25 students, the natural proportion would be approximately three or four. In small group activities there would be only one student with a disability.

What can happen when natural proportions are not adhered to? First of all, teachers can begin to feel overwhelmed by the greater number of students with disabilities for which they are responsible. Secondly, the more students with disabilities in a class, the fewer appropriate role models there may be for them. Thirdly, the quality of interactions and relationships between students with and without disabilities may decrease due to the teacher's lessened ability to guide and nurture them. In addition, students who are in classes or schools where there are an unusually low or nonexistent amount of students with disabilities, because they have all been grouped elsewhere, lose out on all of the benefits these relationships can provide.

So, with all of these disadvantages, is there ever any good reason for exceeding the natural proportion? The only time that it may make sense is to allow for effective staffing patterns. For example, a first grade teacher might agreed to include a higher than normal number of special education students in her class in exchange for the opportunity to team teach with the special education teacher for half of the day, every day. This arrangement would allow the special education teacher to focus her assistance in one room, rather than to be split into three first grade rooms.

If you are in a situation which you feel is beyond the natural proportions and is having a negative impact upon your ability to effectively integrate and instruct, you may wish to share this concept with your administration. You may also want to look at your student groupings and rearrange them so that students with disabilities are integrated more effectively throughout the entire class.

28

Grading

The average student receives 42 report cards in his or her school career.

Do you remember when, as a young child, it was time for the teacher to hand out report cards? Most of us have strong recollections of those nervous moments which turned into elation, relief, or disappointment. Grades, while not the primary purpose of schooling, are a large part of our school experience. And for all of their advantages and disadvantages, they should also be a part of the school experience for a student with disabilities.

How do you grade a student if the work he or she is doing is different from everyone else? First let's look at the underlying philosophy. For grading modifications to work, teachers have to understand that grades are really very arbitrary standards to begin with. If this is true, then teachers should feel free to adjust the arbitrary standards (as they do already) to fit the students requiring modifications. Teachers must also believe that it is healthy to send a message to all students that, because differences are respected and encouraged in schools, students may be graded differently, too. This is really just good preparation for the differences one experiences in adult life in work evaluations, pay scales, etc.

In schools where this philosophical foundation is in place, the following strategies make grading modification quite successful:

1. The school system should adopt a policy concerning assigning grades to students with disabilities. For example:

   > *It should be the policy of this school to employ differential standards for grading and course requirements. The regular classroom teacher is encouraged to modify the curriculum, instructional approaches, and grading practices for those identified as students with disabilities in the regular classroom.*

   Having a policy in place usually helps teachers to feel that they are allowed to be flexible and adjust grading practices.

2. A "Modified Course Agreement" should be designed to communicate, in writing, the agreed upon modifications, especially for grading practices. Although this information is included in a student's IEP, it is usually too brief to be fully understood by all parties. See the sample contract provided following.
3. A multicategory grading system (i.e., not pass/fail) should be used to assist in motivating students and communicating more subtle growth.
4. If the special education and regular education teachers are both involved in grading a student, then both teachers' names should be included on the report card. This often alleviates some of the concern a regular classroom teacher feels about it looking as if he or she alone has made the decision to modify.
5. If the school has an honor roll system, the student with disabilities should be allowed to participate. However, at the high school level, the school may choose to exempt students with modified grades from the class ranking system, or weight modified courses so that these students will not interfere with the class rank of college bound students.
6. Whenever possible, narratives should accompany the grading of students in modified courses. Usually, the teacher comments are much more helpful and informative than the actual letter grade.

Some of these approaches may be ones you feel comfortable taking on your own. If not, you may wish to approach the administration, by yourself or with a committee, to ask for a review of current grading practices in light of these suggestions.

Additional Resources

For more information on grading, refer to:

Carpenter, D. (1985). Grading handicapped pupils: Review and position statement. *Remedial and Special Education, 6*(4), 54-59.

Kinnison, L., Hayes, C., & Acord, J. (1981). Evaluating student progress in mainstream classes. *Teaching Exceptional Children,* Spring.

Course Title: ____________________

Modified Course Agreement

This agreement is written to accommodate ____________________'s special learning style through instruction in the regular education program.

Modified Course Goals:

Modified Course Objectives:

Materials:

Teaching Approach:

Grading Approach:

Testing Approach:

	Signature	Date
Teacher		
Student		
Parent		
Case Coordinator		
PPT Coordinator		
Counselor		
Administrator		

Developed by: John J. Brady, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Killingly Public Schools, Killingly, CT.

29

Count Me In!

"There can be hope only for a society which acts as one big family, and not as many separate ones."

ANWAR AL-SADAT

Sometimes, upon entering a classroom, it is very easy to pick out the "special" students. They may be sitting at a table instead of at a desk like the other students. They may have a folder in front of them instead of a textbook. And they are often seated at the very back corner of the room. These differences may seem subtle, but can send very strong messages to all students that the student with disabilities is not really a member of the class.

To avoid this separateness, a teacher must think of the student with disabilities as one more student in the room. For example, when asking for textbooks for the class, the number should equal the total number of students in the room, including the student with disabilities. This holds true for instructional materials, writing tools, desks and chairs, notices to mail home, lunch counts, and a myriad of other items.

In addition to having the same number of items, use of the items should be the same whenever possible. For example, if all of the students in the room have their name and a number line on their desks, the student with disabilities should, also. If students are seated randomly throughout the room, then the student with disabilities should be seated in this manner. While there are times when adjustments must be made, the assumption should be that the student will be treated just like all of the others whenever possible. If you feel that adjustments are necessary, you may wish to discuss them with another professional who knows the child so that you can design the least different type of modifications.

Other times to "count students in" include:

- When assigning cubbies.
- When setting up homework notebooks.
- When handing out book covers.
- When making up class lists.
- When posting all students' names around the classroom.
- When taking class photographs.
- When assigning rotating chores (e.g., line leader).
- When writing report cards.
- When taking field trips.
- When asking students' parents to help out in class.

By sending these quiet messages of inclusion to all students in your class, you will greatly increase the likelihood of successful integration.

30

Needs Assessment

Knowledge is of two kinds; we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

A new experience may be facing you—instruction and inclusion of a student with disabilities. If you are like the majority of the teaching force around the country, you have had no training in teaching students with special needs of this kind. Or, you may be like most of the rest, and have had one or two courses in special education, way back when.

For integration to be successful, school systems must support teachers through the learning curve involved with this change. One place to start this support is to assess teachers' needs for assistance in a variety of related topic areas. Once this information is gathered, it can be used in a number of ways. Most commonly, it is used to develop staff workshop programs on various topics. However, it can also be used to pair or group colleagues with complementary strengths, so that they can offer support to each other. Needs assessment information is also valuable to specialists, as it helps them to know what types of support are needed from them.

A team of professionals from Waterbury, Connecticut developed the following "Needs Assessment" questionnaire for use district-wide. You may wish to use it in this form, or alter it to fit your own unique circumstances. You can use this form in two different ways: fill it out and give it to your administration or special education teacher as a means of letting them know what your needs are, or suggest that it be distributed to all the staff in your building.

Needs Assessment

Students with disabilities need to be educated in the mainstream to the maximum extent possible. This requires close collaboration between regular and special education staff, as well as training and adequate support. This questionnaire is being distributed to all staff to assess needs related to mainstreaming. This information will then be used to determine future support services. Please answer the items below with the following question in mind: **If   were to increase the level of mainstreaming in the future, what would your needs be?**

In the space to the left of each statement, insert one or more letters, from A to E, to indicate your anticipated need for support services.

A. Need for training (workshop, seminar)

B. Need for consultation

C. Need for materials

D. Need for in-class assistance

E. No need

______ 1. Philosophy and underlying principles of mainstreaming

______ 2. Characteristics of students with disabilities

______ 3. Preparation of nondisabled students for mainstreaming

______ 4. Understanding assessment of students with disabilities

______ 5. IEP design

______ 6. Curriculum for students with disabilities

______ 7. Data collection on student progress

______ 8. Instructional strategies for students with disabilities

______ 9. Fostering relationships between students with and without disabilities

______ 10. Behavior management for students with disabilities

______ 11. Instruction for heterogeneous groups

______ 12. Classroom organization

______ 13. Participation in collaborative consultation

______ 14. Improving team effectiveness

______ 15. Accessing resource and support systems

____ 16. Supervision of paraeducators

____ 17. Legal issues related to students with disabilities

____ 18. Medical issues related to students with disabilities

Please indicate the number of your top three priorities:

__________ __________ __________

Please indicate your role:

__ Regular education teacher __Special education teacher

__ Administrator __ Related professional __Other

Please indicate the level(s) at which you work:

__ Elementary __ Middle __ High school

Please return to__________________________ by______________.

Developed by the LRE Task Force, Waterbury Public Schools, Waterbury, CT.

31

Recess

A child in a typical elementary school will spend 90 hours per year at recess.

Across the country, recess bells ring and children's spirits' soar. They may think, "Finally, no more learning, just fun!" Little do they know that we hope for all kinds of learning to take place during recess time. Recess, when viewed by educators, can be seen as a time for relationship development, for learning to get along, for practicing motor and communication skills, for creating games, and for exploring the environment.

Recess is an important time for students with disabilities, too. In addition to all of the above mentioned benefits, recess has a certain amount of flexibility not always present in classroom situations, which makes it a great time to increase integration. However, it is common to see students with disabilities even more isolated on the playground than in the classroom. Why? One reason is that in the classroom the teacher usually facilitates integration, while on the playground there may not be enough staff to do this. And the fact is, many children, with and without disabilities, do not know how to initiate interactions. Because of this, many children will sit on the sidelines rather than be assertive enough to get involved. Finally, students with disabilities will often hang around the adults on the playground, rather than with their peers. This maybe because of insecurity, or because the adult initiates conversation with them and continues to support their presence through interaction.

With these thoughts in mind, here are some strategies used in many schoolyards to increase the levels of integration:

- Adults on the playground should have a common goal of encouraging student interactions. To achieve this they should minimize the amount of time they allow students with disabilities to "hang around" them. They may even need to use some strong ignoring techniques to help students separate.
- Buddy systems, prearranged by the classroom teacher, can be used for recess time, as well as other times of the day. Students are asked to volunteer to be buddies on a rotating basis, and are then given some directions as to how to be a playground buddy (e.g., if there's a game going on, encourage your buddy to join with you).
- Students often know why the student with the disability isn't fitting in at recess. Ask them! And ask the student himself or herself. Both of these groups can give you insight which may lead to a solution.
- Arrange for a specific chore for the student with disabilities to do at recess. Chores might include handing out equipment, keeping score for a game, selling ice cream, or being a team captain. By having a specific task to do, the student is less likely to simply wander or cling to adults. In addition, the student may be seen in a more positive light by his or her peers as he or she demonstrates capabilities.
- Have the children in your class write essays or stories about what it might be like to play by yourself at recess. Discuss with them the emotions which they might feel if they didn't have friends, or were new to a school. This type of activity will increase their awareness and sensitivity to what might be happening at recess time.
- If your school permits children to take personal toys out onto the playground, encourage students with disabilities to do this. However, talk with their parents about the types of toys which would be appropriate. Toys, or other items, should be age-appropriate, so that they may also attract some interest from peers. For example, a third grader playing with a remote control car is more likely to get positive attention from peers than one playing with a large, plastic car designed for toddlers.
- Recess monitors, whether they are teachers or others, should be aware of the importance of reinforcing all attempts at interaction. Some students with disabilities may even need a formal reinforcement system for their recess behavior. For these students, the teacher and specialists should work together to design something manageable. Students without disabilities should also be reinforced for their interactive behaviors.

Although recess is just one or two periods per day, you'll find that your success at joining children together on the playground transfers easily to classroom settings, resulting in greater integration all day long.

32

Quick Student Information Form

> *"What do I know?"*
>
> MONTAIGNE

Most students with disabilities have school files several inches thick and, while there is valuable information in these files, searching through all that paper to find what you need can be a very daunting task. So, all too often these files collect dust and teachers end up operating without helpful information.

The "Quick Student Information Form" was designed to provide teachers, paraeducators, or volunteers with some basic information with which they can get started teaching and working with a student with disabilities. The categories of information on the form were chosen based on a desire to build a positive base for a new relationship. The information is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a quick highlight of the student. For more thorough information, the teacher should refer to the school file or to specialists who work with the student.

This form is usually completed by the special education teacher working with the student. If you have not received this type of information on any students with disabilities in your class, you might want to give a copy of this form to your special education teacher and ask him or her for help in completing it. A blank form is provided following, as well as a sample of a completed form.

Quick Student Information Form

Student Name ______________________________ D.O.B. _____________

Teachers: ____

Strengths:

Reinforcers/Likes:

Objectives which may be addressed in this class:

Other critical things to know about this student:

Sample Quick Student Information Form

Student Name: Julie West D.O.B. 6/13/85

Teachers: Mrs. Newell and Mr. Harlow

Strengths:

engaging smile, good eye contact, follows directions when able, right arm is better than left, generally happy

Reinforcers/Likes:

one-on-one adult attention

being pushed in wheelchair by peer

listening to music on headphones

looking at magazines

Objectives which may be addressed in this class:

Increase use of left arm for two-handed activities

Increased vocalizations in response to conversation

Correctly shaking head "Yes" or "No" in response to questions

Other critical things to know about this student:

. Julie appears to tire easily and likes to sleep, **but** does not need to sleep during the day.

33

Library

> *Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education.*
>
> CHARLOTTE BRONTE

Books and videos are a wonderful way for children to learn about disabilities. They allow teachers to integrate disability information into the reading curriculum. They allow children to learn about disabilities with enough distance to feel safe and comfortable. And they allow children to stare without being told that staring is rude.

Many books and videos concerning disabilities are available commercially. When making your selections, keep the following points in mind:

- Make sure the information about disabilities is given in a positive light. Some older materials may display people with disabilities as those who should be pitied because of their incapabilities.
- Make sure the information is appropriate to the needs of the students. Some of the materials may deal with the genetics or biology of a disability—information which is not usually needed by elementary age school children.

The following is an annotated bibliography of materials which may be helpful in increasing your students' awareness of disabilities.

Books

- Bookbinder, S. (1978). *Mainstreaming: What every child needs to know about disabilities.* Boston: Exceptional Parent Press.
  A curriculum for young children which teaches about disabilities and focuses on developing positive attitudes toward differences.
- Brown, T. (1984). *Someone special, just like you.* Houston, TX: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
  This story, written for ages 3-7, focuses on the fact that children are more similar than different, and that all have capabilities.
- Dreyer, S. (1985). *The bookfinder: A guide to children's literature about the needs and problems of youth aged 2 and up.* Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance.
  A teacher's resource for finding a large variety of books related to children's problems, including disabilities.
- Greenberg, J. (1985). *What is the sign for friend?* NY: Franklin Watts.
  This story, designed for children ages 5-8, is about the daily life of a child with a hearing impairment.
- Kaufman, C. & Kaufman, G. (1985). *Rajesh.* NY: Atheneum.
  This story, written for children 5-8 years old, describes the school experiences of a child who happens to have a physical disability.
- Krauss, R. (1977). *An exceptional view of life: The Easter Seals story.* Norfolk Island, Australia: Island Heritage.
  A story about the Easter Seals organization which was written and illustrated by children. Designed for children in upper elementary grades.
- Powers, M. (1986). *Our teacher's in a wheelchair.* Niles, IL: Albert Whitman.
  This story, designed for children ages 4-8, describes the abilities of a teacher who happens to be in a wheelchair. Many common questions about wheelchairs are answered.
- Rosenberg, M. (1983). *My friend Leslie: The story of a handicapped child.* NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.
  This story, written for children ages 5-9, describes the friendship between two classmates, one of whom happens to have multiple disabilities.
- *The kids on the block book series.* (1988). Frederick, MD: Twenty First Century Books.
  A series of individual books covering different types of disabilities, from a child in a wheelchair to a child with AIDS. Stories are written at a 3rd-4th grade reading level.

Videos

- Resources in Special Education. (1988). *Different but the same* [Video]. Sacramento, CA: Resources in Special Education.
  A video designed for 4th-8th graders, but worthwhile for a broader range, which presents children and adults with various disabilities. It focuses on the abilities of these individuals, and gives some information about the disability itself. 13 minutes in length.
- Resources in Special Education. (1988). *Holli* [Video]. Sacramento, CA: Resources in Special Education.
  A video designed for 4th-8th graders, but worthwhile for a broader range, which presents a student with hearing impairments. 7 minutes in length.
- Resources in Special Education. (1988). *Marcia* [Video]. Sacramento, CA: Resources in Special Education.
  A video designed for 4th-8th graders, but worthwhile for a broader range, which presents a student with visual impairments. 7 minutes in length.

34

Parents

"Parents should be thought of as scholars of experience."

D. SYLVESTER

Like children, parents come in all kinds. So it is important to avoid generalizations or stereotypes when talking about parents of children with disabilities. You can usually think of working with these parents in the same ways you would with any of your students' parents. However, parents of children with disabilities do differ in one way—they have some experiences which are unique to them as a group.

The first difference is their knowledge level about disabilities, particularly their own child's. They usually are a teacher's best source of information and suggestions regarding their child. You may choose to invite them to speak to your class or other classes about disabilities in general, or about their own child. Parents and teachers often find this to be a very positive way for a parent to be involved with the class. They may also be willing to speak to the PTA about the benefits of integration for all students.

If the parents of a student with disabilities in your class are uncomfortable with this type of role, you may wish to find another parent to speak. Start by inviting parents of other students with disabilities who are in your building or district. Or, if you prefer, many local and national parent groups have free speakers bureaus that anyone can access. Ask your special education teacher for names and numbers of these local organizations or refer to the additional resources.

The second difference you may encounter with parents of a child with disabilities is that their experience usually includes frequent and intensive contact with their child's special education teacher. Therefore, they may want and expect the same kind of relationship with the regular education teacher. Whether this is reasonable or not depends upon several factors—your class size, both parties' ability to communicate efficiently, and your other responsibilities.

Several strategies have been developed to provide parents and teachers with frequent opportunities to communicate in an efficient manner. These include:

- Arranging for specific times to be contacted by phone, unless in an emergency. For example, you may inform parents that Wednesday afternoons from 3:00-4:00 PM is your best time to converse.
- Setting up specific, regular meeting times. These may be as often as once per month at the beginning of the year and less frequently later. This set meeting time will help to comfort parents who are feeling less in touch, and will decrease the number of "drop-in" visits.
- Sending a list of questions/topics to the parents prior to your meeting. This will assist in making your meeting much more efficient as everyone will be prepared. However, be very sensitive about the wording of your questions so that you don't miscommunicate and cause difficulty during the meeting.
- Using a home-school notebook to send messages back and forth on a daily or "as needed" basis. If a paraeducator is working with your class, he or she may be assigned to check the notebook daily and to write home about the student's day.
- Meeting with your team members—the special education teacher, therapists, principal, etc.—to determine who will be responsible for communicating with parents about various issues. When this responsibility is shared, the classroom teacher is less likely to feel overwhelmed.

Additional Resources

There are several good sources for information and suggestions on parent-school relationships. Check out:

Books

Schulz, J. (1987). *Parents and professionals in special education.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Shinsky, E.J. (1990). *Techniques for including students with disabilities: A step-by-step practical guide for principals.* Lansing, MI: Shinsky Seminars.

Organizations

Arc, National Organization on Mental Retardation
500 East Border Street
3rd Floor
Arlington, TX 76010
(800) 433-5255

The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH)
11201 Greenwood Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98133
(206) 361-8870

National Down Syndrome Society
666 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
(800) 221-4602

National Information Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, D.C. 20013
(800) 999-5599

Special Education Resource Center
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT 06457-1520
(203) 632-1485

35

Academic Modifications

> *"What the teacher must concentrate on is what the disabled student can do . . . ."*
>
> NORMAN KUNC

If you have asked yourself the following question, you are not alone: "How in the world do I include this student in an academic activity?" Many teachers are puzzled by how to approach academic modifications for students who are not working on "traditional" academic objectives. Try the simple approach outlined on the following page to see if you can generate some ideas:

1. Have a list of the student's IEP objectives in front of you.
2. Look at one of your typical lesson plans, including the text, workbook, or whatever materials you might use.
3. Consider **any** and **all** ways in which some of the objectives could be addressed. Think about modifications in the environment, materials, content, and quantity of work.

For example, Becky is a member of a fourth grade class. Her objectives are to:

- Orally count from 1 to 25.
- Count objects from 1 to 10 with correct one-to-one correspondence.
- Copy and print letters of the alphabet.
- Increase basic sight word vocabulary from 6 to 15 words.
- Raise her hand to ask for help.
- Print her first name from memory.
- Increase her attention span when listening to discussions.
- Follow a three-step direction.

A typical lesson chosen by the teacher might look like the following:

Topic: Geography and American History

Objectives: To familiarize students with the Frontier period in American history.
- Maps showing westward movement
- Reasons for expansion westward
- Hardships faced and overcome by settlers
- Significant historical figures

Activities:
1. Students will read pp. 89-103 in their texts.
2. Students will complete maps showing significant locations, workbook pp. 17-18.
3. Students will discuss in small groups reasons for expansion and hardships faced.
4. Students will do homework papers/projects identifying a current day person (hero/heroine) who has faced hardships and overcome them.

The following is a list of ways the teacher might choose to address Becky's objectives within this part of the lesson:

- Have Becky copy the title of the story.
- Have Becky copy any selected words or phrases from the story.
- Have Becky copy the labels from the map onto paper or a blank map.
- Have Becky write her name on all papers she does.
- Have Becky count how many pictures she sees.
- Have Becky listen to answers peers give to the teacher's questions.
- Ask a peer to read the pages aloud to Becky.
- Prerecord the pages on audio cassette and have Becky listen through earphones as the students are reading silently.
- Give Becky three-step directions to follow, such as, "Get out your book, put it on your desk, and get out a pencil," or "Come and get these papers, give one to every student, and bring me the rest."
- Choose one or two vocabulary words frequently used in the material, print them on paper or cards, and have Becky find the words, copy the words, read the words to a peer, etc. Examples might include "land," "America," "United States."
- Have Becky count how many students are present and then pass out the correct number of papers, tests, pencils, maps, books, etc.
- Have Becky identify her heroes and write their names from a model.
- Remind Becky to raise her hand to ask for help, and do not respond when she yells out.
- Have Becky work with peers to do map work—they could direct her where to color in the Santa Fe Trail, for example.

The key to developing methods to address nontraditional objectives is to think beyond the focus of the activity to the periphery. Many things are taking place in a classroom at any one time—look at the whole picture in order to find ways to include the student with disabilities in your classroom.

Additional Resources

Jorgensen, C. (1992). Natural supports in inclusive schools: Curricular and teaching strategies. In J. Nisbet (Ed.), *Natural supports in school, at work, and in the community for people with severe disabilities.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Stainback, S. & Stainback, W. (1992). *Curriculum considerations in inclusive classrooms: Facilitating learning for all students.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

36

Art, Music, & Physical Education Classes

> *"Every life is a work of art, shaped by the person who lives it."*
>
> UNKNOWN

Most students with disabilities experience their first integration in one of the "specials"—art, music, or physical education. It is often assumed that these are the easiest classes in which to include students, and so these teachers are left to figure things out for themselves. However, teachers of the arts need some strategies and ideas, too. Many of the strategies presented in other sections of this book will be appropriate for these classes, but in addition, some specific to art, music, and physical education may be helpful. Of course, the ideas will need to be chosen and/or modified based upon the level of the class and the unique needs of the child with disabilities.

Art Class

Because art classes are usually focused on individual work, they lend themselves beautifully to inclusion of students with varying abilities. The following ideas are ways to include students with lesser abilities. Have the student:

- Work on color identification.
- Work on learning the concept of different textures, perhaps through collage.
- Hand out materials.
- Be involved with the Occupational Therapist during class.
- Work on cutting.
- Work on holding writing instruments.

- Practice writing name on paper.
- Use heavier stock paper.
- Use weighted paint jars.
- Design a project around language symbols.
- Use larger markers or thicker brushes.
- Use handles of brushes enlarged with a washcloth and tape, sponges, or clay.
- Manipulate clay.
- Assist in hanging up artwork.
- Tear paper for paper mache.
- Use neon colored materials.
- Use a tray or cut-out box to limit the work area by giving edges.
- Use scented markers or paints with a scent added.
- Use paints with sand added to provide texture.
- Use sandpaper in various projects.
- Use taped down paper to hold it in place.
- Use sponges for painting.
- Use paint put in various containers, such as spray bottles or plastic mustard bottles.

Music Class
Most children love music and are very motivated to participate in music activities. The following ideas provide for various levels of participation and ability. Have the student:

- Listen to music or shut out noise with headphones.
- Pass out books or instruments.
- Turn pages for the piano player.
- Be involved with the Occupational Therapist during class.
- Incorporate counting and rhythmic activities.
- Shake a morrocca while others sing.
- Operate a tape recorder manually or through adaptive switches.
- Sing along or simply sit and experience the music.
- Sit with a small group with chairs placed in circles to perhaps feel less overwhelmed.
- Pick out key notes on an instrument for other students to compose around when students are working together to make new music.
- Bring in favorite music from home and discuss it.
- Sign the words to a song, or use symbols.
- Learn the motions to songs that use them.

- Sit or stand near a powerful singer or group of singers.

Also:

- Ask the parents if the student shows any strong preferences for particular types of music or instruments.

Physical Education Class
Have the student:

- Serve as the scorekeeper or timekeeper.
- Stand in a space marked off on the floor with masking tape (e.g., during kickball or exercises).
- Do stretching exercises.
- Operate a tape recorder for music during stretching.
- Be "spotted" by peers during more challenging activities.
- Serve as the starter for races.
- Hand out and collect supplies.
- Be involved with the Physical Therapist during class.
- Buddy with a student who is physically talented.
- Practice dressing skills (e.g., shoes, shirts, jackets).
- Be the team captain to pick players.
- Use Nerf materials—these are lighter, softer, and easier to grab.

Also:

- Apply "disabilities" to other students during competitive events.
- Use "pinch hitters" and the like so that the student can do part of the activity.
- For sensory impaired students, use balls with bells inside or neon colored materials.
- Borrow wheelchairs and have all the students navigate a wheelchair obstacle course.
- Have all the students compete in a wheelchair race.
- Invite guest lecturers who are athletes with disabilities.

Additional Resources

For more information about including students with disabilities in art, music, and physical education classes, check out:

Clements, C. & Clements, R. (1984). *Art and mainstreaming.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Kunc, N. (1984). *Ready, willing and disabled.* Toronto, Canada: Frontier College.

Schulz, J.B., Carpenter, C.D., & Turnbull, A.P. (1991). *Mainstreaming exceptional students: A guide for classroom teachers.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

37

Student Investigators

"Light tomorrow with today."
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Many young students like to think of themselves in the role of private investigator or supersnoop, trying to find wrongs so that they can be righted. If you have some students like this, turn their snoopiness into an asset and have them evaluate the architectural accessibility of your building.

Although most brand new buildings have been designed to meet the regulations concerning architectural accessibility, many older buildings are not up to code. This may cause difficulty for some students with disabilities. Whether or not it is of a concern to you because of a student you are currently working with, being aware of the accessibility issues has several benefits. First, the activity of investigating will heighten children's sensitivity to the everyday challenges many people with disabilities face and overcome. Secondly, it can make them more aware of the adaptations and technology that have been developed to assist people with disabilities. And finally, this activity often allows children to have a greater understanding of our society's values of fairness and equality.

To make the most of "student investigators" follow these steps:

1. Look over the "Architectural Barriers Checklist" provided and determine which items are reasonable for your students to assess.
2. Divide your students into small groups or pairs for the activity.

3. Explain to them that they will be investigating the building to determine how "friendly" it is for someone with a disability. You may wish to introduce the following vocabulary words, depending upon the age of the students: architecture, barrier, accessible, clearance, obstacle, protrude, interior, audible, Braille, dispensers. Be sure to review the checklist and change the language wherever necessary for the understanding of your students.
4. When the students are finished, discuss their findings. Allow them the opportunity to write a report as a class, or to meet with the principal to share their findings. This activity will have the most value if at least some action is taken in response to the students' recommendations.
5. As a follow-up activity, you may wish to invite an architect to be a guest speaker. He or she should be encouraged to bring pictures of the many ways in which buildings are designed to be fully accessible.

Architectural Barriers Checklist

		Yes	No
1.	Are the parking spaces 96" wide, with a 60" inch access aisle?	____	____
2.	Are accessible parking spaces near the main entrance?	____	____
3.	Is there a drop off zone at the entrance?	____	____
4.	Is the width of the entrance doorway at least 32"?	____	____
5.	Is the entrance door handle easy to grasp?	____	____
6.	Is the entrance door easy to open (not too heavy)?	____	____
7.	Is the travel path free of obstacles?	____	____
8.	Is the travel path wide enough for a wheelchair?	____	____
9.	Do obstacles protrude no more than 4"?	____	____
10.	Are elevator buttons low enough (48") to be reached from a wheelchair?	____	____
11.	Are elevator markings in Braille?	____	____
12.	Does the elevator provide audible signals?	____	____
13.	Does the elevator interior provide a turning area of 51" for a wheelchair?	____	____
14.	Does the bathroom door have a lever handle?	____	____
15.	Are the bathroom doors at least 32" wide?	____	____
16.	Are toilet stall doors at least 32" wide?	____	____
17.	Is the bathroom large enough for wheelchair turnaround (51" minimum)?	____	____
18.	Are grab bars provided in toilet stalls?	____	____
19.	Are sinks at least 30" high with room for a wheelchair to roll under?	____	____
20.	Are sink handles easily reached and used?	____	____
21.	Are soap and towel dispensers no more than 48" from the floor?	____	____

Adapted from National League of Cities. (1991). *Local officials guide: Complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.* Washington, DC: Author.

38

Integrated Therapy

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

UNKNOWN

The days of isolated skill training are quickly passing. We know through research and experience that all children learn best when given immediate opportunities to apply skills within real contexts. This need is even greater for those children with disabilities who have difficulty generalizing skills to new places, people, or materials. Therefore, many schools are redesigning their delivery of physical, occupational, and speech therapy so that they are provided in regular classroom settings.

"Integrated therapy," also sometimes called the "transdisciplinary model," provides several benefits in addition to easier application of learned material:

- Students who receive therapy services can do so without missing out on other lessons. In "pull-out" models, students who often need the most structure, consistency, and instruction are the same students who have their day broken up by leaving for therapy.
- When therapists are in the classroom they can model simple therapeutic techniques for the teacher and the student's peers. Many of these techniques may then be used throughout the day and week, rather than just during a thirty minute therapy session. For example, the speech therapist may model how to encourage a student to use a new sign or symbol he or she has learned.

- When therapists provide services in classroom settings, the teacher and the class have a wonderful resource at their disposal. Many students who are not labeled as having special needs may also benefit by having another professional in the room. This may be as simple as having the speech therapist answer a student's question about an assignment while the teacher is busy, or could be as extensive as having the occupational therapist leading the whole class through an activity to warm up their hands prior to a writing lesson.
- Communication between therapists and the teacher is much more efficient and effective when these people are actually in the same location from time to time!
- Therapists, like other specialists, often have little experience in regular classroom settings, and may not understand the skills a child needs in order to succeed in such an environment. For example, in small settings, it is common for children with special needs to be allowed to call out for help, rather than raise their hand. By providing therapy in the classroom, specialists will be able to see all of the skills a child needs for that setting, and then be able to more effectively support the classroom teacher.

It may be easiest to integrate therapy services into certain types of activities. For example, physical therapy is most easily integrated into physical education periods, recess, hallway transitions, and hands-on lessons. Occupational therapy is most easily integrated into lunch or snack times, art class, music class, handwriting, or lessons involving manipulatives. Speech therapy lends itself to any period in which verbal communication is encouraged. These may include cooperative learning groups, lunch time, homeroom periods at the beginning and end of the day, and language arts lessons.

Of course, because each child has unique needs, the best starting place is to approach the therapist and brainstorm ideas for how to integrate therapy services into the child's regular classroom day (See Strategy #20 and Strategy #50).

Additional Resources

For more information about integrated therapy, look for:

Martin, K. (Ed.). (1990). *Physical therapy practice in educational environments: Policies and guidelines.* Alexandria, VA: American Physical Therapy Association.

Calculator, S.N. & Jorgensen, C.M. (1992). A technical assistance model for promoting integrated communication supports and services for students with disabilities. *Seminars in Speech and Language, 13*(2), 99-110.

Christensen, S.S. & Luckett, C.H. (1990). Getting into the classroom and making it work! *Language, Speech & Hearing Services in Schools, 21*(2), 110-113.

Rainforth, B., York, J., & Macdonald, C. (1992). *Collaborative teams for students with severe disabilities: Integrating therapy and educational services.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

39

Finding Time to Talk

There are only twenty-four hours in a day.

One of the most common laments of teachers trying to integrate students with disabilities is the difficulty of finding enough time to talk and collaborate with team members. Most staff members resort to catching each other in the hallways, the teachers' lounge, or the bathrooms—not always ideal places to hold productive conversations! Given the nature of schools, these meeting places will always be one of the avenues for communication. However, effectively integrated schools have found other methods for augmenting these "catch as catch can" times.

One popular and effective strategy involves the use of substitute teachers. Once or twice per month a "Collaboration Sign-Up Sheet" is placed in the office, with the daily schedule written down the side of the form, in half hour blocks of time. Teachers and support staff sign up in pairs for the time period that is best for them, and can sign up for more than one block if necessary. The school then brings in two substitute teachers for a day or half a day, depending upon the need. The substitutes cover for short blocks for each of the teachers on the schedule. While this option is fairly inexpensive, the cost can be decreased by bringing in one substitute teacher instead of two. In this case, one of the two staff members meets on a preparation or free period, while the substitute relieves the other. The following month the two staff members can switch so that the same person is not regularly using his or her preparation period. Most schools find the cost associated with this strategy minimal in exchange for the benefits.

Another strategy for finding extra collaboration time is through classroom doubling. When two teachers in the same grade are doing a similar lesson with their students, the two classes are merged for that period. This can allow one of the two teachers to be free for a short time. If these types of doubling activities are scheduled regularly once or twice per month, it is usually possible to plan for a parent volunteer to be present at that time. However, even with the volunteer's help, it is usually best to plan a lesson which is fairly simple to manage for such a large group of children.

The third method used in many schools is very simple—asking someone else to cover a class for a short period of time. First, make a list of all of the professionals in the building who do not have full-time classroom responsibility. This list usually includes the principal, psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, special education supervisor, and speech, occupational, and physical therapists. Now, if the list contains at least four names, and if each of these individuals were asked to teach one lesson per month, you would have a great start toward developing some collaboration time. Unfortunately, many teachers' reactions to this strategy is to think that these people do not want to be bothered. On the contrary, my experience has been that most of these individuals are energized by the teaching opportunity. So go ahead and ask!

No single idea for time building will solve all of your problems. But put two or three different strategies together and you'll find the time you need to collaborate with colleagues.

Additional Resource

For more information, check out:

Raywid, M.A. (1993). Finding time for collaboration. *Educational Leadership, 51*(1), 30-34.

40

Collaborative Teaching

"The nice thing about teamwork is that you always have others on your side."
MARGARET CARTY

No book on integration is complete without the mention of collaborative teaching. Collaborative teaching is an instructional strategy which has been used by many teachers to effectively meet the needs of very diverse classes of students. It has gained increasing popularity with the increasing inclusion of students with disabilities, usually taking place between the classroom teacher and the special education teacher. Whether used for an occasional activity, a regular period, or the full day, it helps to have certain factors in place.

Recent research on collaborative teaching ("Educators Unlock," 1993) has established that successful collaborative teaching occurs when the following factors are present:

- The teachers share a common belief system about teaching.
- The teachers appreciate student diversity.
- The teachers share responsibility for the students.
- The teachers have strategies for teaching individual and groups.
- The teachers are adept at modifying the curriculum.

With these underlying factors in place, teachers can choose from several approaches to collaborative teaching. Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend (1989) have described these approaches as complementary instruction, team teaching, and supportive learning activities:

1. **Complementary instruction** describes a classroom situation in which the regular educator teaches the basic content of the class and the special educator teaches academic survival skills such as note taking and study skills.
2. **Team teaching** describes a classroom situation in which both teachers take turns being responsible for teaching the basic academic content. Decisions are made based on the teachers' interest and skill level with the material, rather than on their certification or job label.
3. **Supportive learning activities** describes a classroom situation in which the regular educator is responsible for presenting the basic points of a lesson, while the special educator is responsible for the application activities which enhance comprehension and retention (e.g., science experiments and discussions).

Teachers who are collaboratively teaching may choose to use just one of these approaches all of the time, or move back and forth from one model to another based on the specific needs of the students and the complexity of the material to be covered.

In addition to having the above components in place, experience has shown that when the roles and responsibilities of the two teachers are clearly defined, collaborative teaching is more successful. One school, upon moving to a collaborative teaching model throughout the building, developed the following delineation of roles and responsibilities. By writing these points down in this format, the staff found it easier to communicate about collaborative teaching to all involved—teachers, administrators, and parents.

Danbury High School Team Teaching Model

A. Responsibilities of General Education Teacher

1. Determine concepts necessary to meet curriculum objectives.
2. Identify goals and objectives of the course.
3. Teach specific class content.
4. Provide knowledge on scope and sequence of content area.
5. Determine key points of a lesson.
6. Utilize various instructional strategies to deliver and evaluate instruction.

B. Responsibilities of Special Education Teacher

1. Teach study skills and learning strategies.
2. Develop study guides.
3. Collect data on student performance.
4. Provide diagnostic information on academic levels and learning styles of special education students.
5. Adapt textbooks, assignments, and tests.

C. Shared Responsibilities

1. Plan instructional activities to achieve goals/objectives of course.
2. Select and order classroom materials and supplemental aids.
3. Establish grading procedures.
4. Establish classroom management plan.
5. Give individual assistance to students.
6. Instruct the whole class.
7. Maintain home contact.
8. Develop effective teaching practices.
9. Share effective teaching practices with other educators.

Developed by Joyce Emmett, Danbury Public Schools, Danbury, CT.

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References

Bauwens, J., Hourcade, J., & Friend, M. (1989). Cooperative teaching: A model for general and special education integration. *Remedial and Special Education, 10*(2), 17-22.

Educators unlock the magic of co-teaching. (1993, Summer). *Counterpoint,* p. 5.

Additional Resource

Thousand, J. & Villa, R. (1990). Sharing expertise and responsibilities through teaching teams. In W. Stainback and S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support networks for inclusive schooling* (pp. 151-166). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

41

Disruptive Behavior

"The only things children wear out faster than shoes are parents and teachers."

UNKNOWN

Misbehavior is a normal part of childhood. Even the most well-behaved child occasionally gets involved in a little bit of mischief, whether at home or school. Students with disabilities should be expected and allowed to do this to the same degree as other children. But what about the child whose behavior is disruptive to the class in terms of its quantity and type? This is a concern often voiced by teachers who have been asked to integrate students with disabilities. The following ideas have been used in many integrated classrooms:

- Whenever possible, treat the child with disabilities as you would the other students in your class. For example, if the rule in your class is that if a student hits another student he or she goes to the principal, then this should hold true for the student with disabilities, also. It is important that children with disabilities learn acceptable behavior without always having exceptions made for them. Now, having said that, it is important to point out that some children may not understand the concept of being sent to the principal, while for others this response might make matters worse. Therefore, behavior plans must always be considered on an individual basis, with the goal of including the child in the same behavior plan as that used for the other students whenever possible.
- If a child has a rather unique behavior, such as flapping his or her hands, it may be helpful to discuss the behavior with the rest of the

class. By answering a few questions for the other students, you will greatly increase their support and understanding of the student and of your efforts to change the behavior. When do you have this discussion? You may choose to have it prior to the student's arrival to your class. If you have this opportunity, be sure to also discuss many of the strengths the child brings to the class. If you cannot discuss the behavior prior to the child's arrival, you may wish to wait until the behavior appears to be a problem, and then discuss it with or without the student's presence.

- Often, students' behaviors bother a teacher much more than they bother other students. It is important for the teacher to reflect on the **actual** level of disruption caused by a behavior before determining how to address it. Is the behavior annoying other students? Is it interfering with their ability to do their work? Is the behavior interfering with the child's ability to make friends? Or is it a behavior that can be accepted, for now, as one of the child's unique differences? If the answer to the last question is "yes," then it is probably wise to spend your energy on other learning objectives.
- Once you have decided to address an inappropriate behavior, there are many methods for correcting it. For students with moderate and severe disabilities, one of the most effective methods is to analyze the communicative function of the behavior (Donnellan, Mirenda, Mesaros, & Fassbender, 1984). This approach is based on the premise that all behavior communicates something. For example, the student who grabs things is usually communicating a desire for the object. For students with disabilities, who often do not have effective speaking skills, inappropriate behaviors can take over as a means of communication.

  Following this analysis, the teacher, in conjunction with other specialists, can instruct the student in more acceptable ways to communicate the same need. For example, consider a student who often throws materials on the floor. By hypothesizing about the communicative function of the behavior, you may determine that the student doesn't want to do the work, wants some attention, or wants some help. Using your professional judgment, you narrow your hypothesis to one function, "wants help," and then can begin to teach the student other methods for communicating this need (e.g., raising his or her hand, using sign language for "help").

To ease this analysis, Donnelan et al. designed a detailed observation tool. The following blank "Observation Tool" form and sample filled-out form are a much simplified version of this approach. Use the "Observation Tool" to help you gain a communicative perspective on the student's behavior.

Observation Tool

Student: ______________________________

	FUNCTIONS									
Description of Behavior	wants attention	wants help	wants specific thing(s)	self-stimulation	frustration	anger	boredom	happiness/positive	other	other

Sample Observation Tool

Student: Luis Rivera

	FUNCTIONS									
Description of Behavior	**wants attention**	**wants help**	**wants specific thing(s)**	**self-stimulation**	**frustration**	**anger**	**boredom**	**happiness/positive**	**other**	**other**
Makes loud, throaty noises	X									
Grabs at other students' belongings			X							
Gets out of seat to wander around classroom					X					

Additional Resources

For additional suggestions on dealing with disruptive behavior in the classroom, consult with the specialists in your building and/or the following sources:

Casey-Black, J. & Knoblock, P. (1989). Integrating students with challenging behaviors. In R. Gaylord-Ross (Ed.), *Integration strategies for students with handicaps* (pp. 129-148). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Forest, M. & Pearpoint, J. (1990). Supports for addressing severe maladaptive behaviors. In W. Stainback and S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support networks for inclusive schooling.* Baltimore, MD: Brooks.

Meyer, L. & Evans, I. (1986). Modification of excess behavior. In R. Homer, L. Meyer, and H. Fredericks (Eds.), *Education of learners with severe handicaps: Exemplary Service Strategies.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Schulz, J.B., Carpenter, C.D., & Turnbull, A.P. (1991). *Mainstreaming exceptional students: A guide for classroom teachers.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Reference

Donnellan, A., Mirenda, P., Mesaros, R., & Fassbender, L. (1984). Analyzing the communicative functions of aberrant behavior. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 9*(3), 201-212.

42

Schedule Reminders

"I've a grand memory for forgetting."
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Most of us like to know what the day ahead may bring. We get up in the morning and think about what we will do, what chores we have, what adventures await us. When we are unsure about what the day will be like we can become hesitant, impatient, or uncomfortable. These same feelings hold true for students with disabilities. They, too, desire a sense of understanding and security about what their day will bring. How does one manage this in classrooms where the schedule differs from day to day, with art class one day, an assembly the next, and special projects at another time?

"Schedule reminders" refers to a broad range of methods for helping students know their schedule for the day. The obvious method is to review the schedule orally with the child each morning. Most elementary level teachers do this with their classes daily. However, this is often not adequate for students with disabilities. They may need to have their schedule reviewed more than once per day, especially right before a major transition, such as going to a "special." They may also need to have the schedule in a more concrete format than a verbal review. Depending on the level of the child, one of the following methods may be successful:

- Begin with an 8 1/2 X 11 piece of paper, divided into periods of the day, with or without time notations, depending upon the student's ability. Then collect a word or picture for each major activity of the day, and any possible special events. You can use handwritten words, pictures from magazines, handdrawn pictures, photographs, symbols used on communication boards (e.g., Meyers Johnson symbols), or pictures of American Sign Language. At the beginning of each day, sit with the student (or ask someone else to) and review the schedule, placing the words or pictures in the proper order on the paper. This can be done with Velcro or paper clips so that the pictures can be reused day after day. Then, at each point in the day when it is time to move on to the next activity, the student is referred to his or her schedule as a reminder.

A variation on this approach is to put only the current and next activity on the schedule at any one time, and when an activity is finished, that picture is removed and put into a "finished" folder, envelope, or box. This concrete removal of the picture sends a clear message to the child that the activity is finished and it is time to move on.

- For students who may be unable to comprehend paper symbols, another approach is possible. It involves the use of concrete objects, or "object miniatures," to represent the activities of the day. For example, homeroom/opening might be represented by a calendar piece or a miniature flag, math might be represented by some coins or one of the manipulatives used, and lunch might be represented by a napkin or paper bag. The most effective objects are ones which the student will clearly relate to the activity, so, for example, if the student buys lunch in the cafeteria, a paper bag would not be very meaningful, whereas a plastic spoon might. In addition, the most effective objects are small enough so that the student can attach them with Velcro to a board, place them on his or her desk during the activity, or carry them along. Just as with the paper symbols, objects can be laid out for the whole day at the start, or presented for just the current and next activity, with finished activity objects going into a "finished" box.

For assistance in using either of these strategies, check with your speech therapist or special education teacher. They are likely to have some experience with these approaches and can help you to use the methods easily and effectively.

Additional Resource

The following source has additional information:

Baumgart, D., Johnson, J., & Helmstetter, E. (1990). *Augmentative and alternative communication systems for persons with moderate and severe disabilities.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

43

Choice Making

"The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice."
GEORGE ELIOT

For many years it was believed that people with severe disabilities were unable to make safe choices for themselves to any extent. Specialists, parents, and care givers took choices away from these individuals and protected them by making decisions for them. While the intention behind this action may have been noble, the outcomes were unhealthy. One of two things usually occurred. Either the individual stopped trying to make choices and became passive and dependent, or the individual expressed his or her frustration over the lack of choice through behaviors deemed inappropriate.

Today we recognize the need of all children to have the opportunity to make choices in their lives. While these opportunities may need to be safely structured by adults, they can and should exist for children with disabilities, also. Following are examples of ways to encourage and support effective choice making in classrooms, for students with and without disabilities:

- Establish a daily or weekly "choice time" when students are allowed to choose among several different activities for a short period of time.
- Present a lesson to the students on choice making. Discuss the things to consider when making choices, the possible consequences, and the feelings involved in making choices.
- Allow the student to choose the order in which he or she completes work papers or tasks. Say, "You need to do these three things . . .

which would you prefer to do first?" Make it clear that the student is not being given the choice to do or to not do the work.

- When possible, allow the student to choose who to sit next to for certain activities, such as lunch and assemblies.
- Encourage the student to make choices at lunch, even if you're afraid that he or she will choose something he or she will not want to eat. This doesn't usually happen twice in a row!
- Provide a menu of rewards which the student can earn. Then let the student choose his or her reward—either to work toward or to be chosen after reaching his or her goal. An even more effective variation on this strategy is to ask the student to help in developing the menu of rewards.

Many other opportunities for choice making arise throughout the school day. Take advantage of them whenever it is possible and reasonable for you to do so.

Additional Resource

Dyer, K., Dunlap, G., & Winterling, V. (1990). Effects of choice making on the serious problem behaviors of students with severe handicaps. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 23*(4), 515-524.

44

Lunch Pals

> *"The more I travel the more I realize that fear makes strangers of people who should be friends."*
>
> SHIRLEY MACLAINE

Most teachers crave a quiet lunch alone, at least from time to time. For children, on the other hand, lunch is a time to talk, make noise, and have fun with friends—the perfect time for students with disabilities to be included. Not only can they learn and grow just through exposure to this fun part of school, but it is also an excellent time to address many social skill and communication objectives they may have in their IEPs.

Unfortunately, it is common for children to be so excited about lunchtime that they will take off and leave the student with disabilities behind, both figuratively and literally. It is also common to see the student with disabilities sitting at the end of a cafeteria table, uninvolved, or worse yet, to see all of the special education students sitting together with a special education teacher or paraeducator. The simplest solution to this problem is to establish a "Lunch Pals" program.

First, set up a list of all the students in your class, separated into twos, and determine a rotation system. Students can be paired with children of the same sex or in mixed pairs, depending upon student age and teacher judgment. Then choose a time period for which students will be assigned as lunch pals, usually varying from one day to a week. Next, determine the roles and responsibilities for pals, such as:

- Walk to the cafeteria together.
- Sit with each other, next to any other pals you want to.
- Help your pal if he or she needs help.

You may wish to ask the students to add their ideas to your list. Finally, describe the Lunch Pals program to the students. Help them to understand that the assignments are temporary, that they are free to talk and visit with other children, too, but that your hope is that they might make some new friends. This is also an excellent time to remind the students with disabilities to take along their conversation books (See Strategy #11).

Once you get started, you may wish to explain this program to any other staff who have cafeteria duty, so that they can support it as well as give you feedback. You may also wish to hold a class meeting after a few weeks to ask the students for their feedback and suggestions. Finally, you will probably rest easier on your own lunch break if you peek in on the class once or twice in the first week to be sure all is well. Then you can just let it run as you sit back enjoying your lunch, knowing that integration is occurring even in your absence.

45

Simulating Learning Difficulties

> *"We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are."*
>
> ANAIS NIN

While it can be fairly simple to simulate physical disabilities (see Strategy #6), it is a bit more challenging to simulate a learning disability or mental retardation. However, these types of disabilities usually attract the most misunderstanding and teasing. Therefore, it may be important to offer students some simulation activities. The following three activities have been used successfully alone and together by classroom teachers:

1. Review with the class the concept of syllables, so that they know how to count the number of syllables per word. Then direct the students to make up a sentence in which every word has three (or four) syllables (Barnes, Berrigen, & Biklen, 1978). This is much harder than it sounds! Examples include:
   - Christopher Columbus discovered Indians. (3 syllables)
   - Everyone investigates mysterious occurrences. (4 syllables)
2. Tell the students that you will give them a series of directions which they should follow as fast as they can. Then read this entire list of directions quickly:
   - Stand up.
   - Turn around three times.
   - Turn around 1/2 turn.

- Put up three fingers.
- Touch your desk.
- Sit down quickly.
- Close your eyes.
- Wave to the teacher.

Students will usually begin to flounder after the second or third direction. The directions can be adjusted to suit the level of the children in the classroom.

3. Pass out the following story, "Mama and Ned," to all the students. Direct them to read the story and answer the questions as best they can. As you can see, the story has several made-up words in it that will make it a frustrating task for most students. When the students have finished, check their answers and discuss their feelings about not understanding the material. You can choose whether or not to give them the key.

KEY: dworking = playing
smitt = puppy
blatted = ran
blatt = run
ko = we

Maria and Ned

One day Maria and Ned were dworking outside. Along came a little smitt walking all by himself.

"Look," said Maria. "It is a smitt."

Maria and Ned blatted toward the smitt.

Then Ned said, "Stop. Ko don't know this smitt. He could bite. Ko should be careful. "

Maria asked, "What should ko do?"

Ned and Maria though for a few minutes. They decided to blatt and find Maria's mother. She would know what to do about the smitt.

1. What were Maria and Ned doing?

2. What did they see?

3. Why did they stop blatting toward the smitt?

4. What else could they have done besides find Maria's mother?

For each of the three activities, the follow-up discussion becomes the critical element. It is important to lead the children to an understanding of the difficulties faced by some students with disabilities, and of their need for respect and support.

Reference

Barnes, E., Berrigan, C., & Biklen, D. (1978). *What's the difference? Teaching positive attitudes toward people with disabilities.* Syracuse, NY: Human Policy Press.

46

Making the Most of Computers

Perhaps "user friendly" has more than one meaning . . . .

One of the wonderful things about computers is their versatility. They can be used by one person to solve complex scientific problems and by another to play a simple game. They can be used for directed instruction or for independent, creative learning. And most importantly, they can be used by almost anyone. Whether you have access to one computer on an occasional basis, or have several computers in your classroom, their use can be a terrific integration tool.

Because computers involve the senses of sight, sound, and touch, they are effective instructional tools for many students with disabilities. Every year new software is developed especially for use by students with disabilities, and these programs can be used in regular classrooms just as easily as in special education classrooms. In addition, most students with disabilities can easily use "typical" educational software, at the same or lower grade levels. This then gives the teacher some alternate curriculum activities for the student who is functioning at a different level than the other students in the class. Check with your special education teacher about possible software, or explore some of the sources listed following.

As well as serving an instructional purpose, computers are wonderful for attracting children. Most children are fascinated by computers and very interested in operating them. Therefore, a teacher can easily find volunteers to serve as computer tutors, or can choose to simply allow children to gravitate to the computer when their work is done. If the student with disabilities happens to be working on the computer as part of his or her academic day, then peers will surround him or her and ask to share the computer. The computer may then facilitate opportunities for practicing communication and social skills, as well as academics. So, whenever possible, arrange for students with disabilities to work with a computer.

For the student who may seem more limited, it is important to recognize the value of partial participation. For example, if the student cannot physically operate the computer, he or she may still benefit from watching and focusing attention on the screen. While a student may not be able to press a single key on the keyboard, he or she may be able to push a larger, adapted panel. And some students may simply benefit from being in the middle of a small group of enthusiastic children gathered around a computer.

Many students with severe disabilities may come to your class with their own computer, usually for communication purposes. Again, this may automatically attract other students. To ensure interactions among peers, ask the specialists to teach you and **your students** how to support and respond to the computerized communication system. In addition, explore possibilities for other students to occasionally use the system, also. This sharing will provide further opportunities for integration.

Additional Resources

There is a wealth of information available on computers and their use in special education. Start by talking with your special education co-workers—teachers and therapists—for their ideas. Or, refer to these expert sources:

Burns, E. & Mistrett, S. (1988). Switchware technology: Improving computer usage for students with physical or motor impairments. *Educational Technology, 28*(12), 45-47.

Day, V.P. & Sweitzer, H.F. (1990). Microcomputers: Tools for creating curriculum modifications. *Academic Therapy, 25*(4), 429-437.

Gardner, J.E., Taber-Brown, F.M., & Wissick, C.A. (1992). Selecting age-appropriate software for adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 24*(3), 60-63.

Greer, J.G. & Greer, B.R. (1986). Public domain software—new horizons for the family. *The Exceptional Parent, 16*(6), 41-46.

Lewis, R.B. (1990). Noncommercial instructional software for students with severe, multiple handicaps. *Journal of Special Education Technology, 10*(3), 157-168.

Summers, E.G. & Gammon, G.H. (1987). Creating the least restrictive environment: A case study in microcomputer software utilization. *B.C. Journal of Special Education, 11*(2), 131-148.

York, J., Nietupski, J., & Hamre-Nietupski, S. (1985). A decision making process for using microswitches. *Journal of the Association for Severely Handicapped, 10*(4), 214-223.

47

Academic Modifications: What About Reading?

"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble."

HELEN KELLER

Many teachers are concerned about how to include students with disabilities who are nonreaders into reading lessons. Traditionally, teachers have pulled aside one group of students to work on reading aloud, while the rest of the class worked independently on writing assignments, spelling papers, or such. More recently, the move to whole class and whole language instruction has many teachers working with all students at one time. Whichever method is used, there are still many ways to involve nonreaders in the lessons.

To begin with, repeat the process suggested in Strategy #35:

1. Have a list of the student's IEP objectives in front of you.
2. Look at one of your typical lesson plans, including the text, workbook, or whatever materials you might use.
3. Consider **any** and **all** ways in which some of the objectives could be addressed. Think about modifications to the environment, materials, content, and quantity of work.

For example, Hector, a nine-year old in third grade, has the following objectives:

- Identify ten vocabulary words.
- Respond to "wh" questions.

- Repeat two to three word utterances.
- Produce final consonants.
- State full name, age, school name, and teacher's name.
- Rote count from one to eight.
- Demonstrate understanding of one-to-one correspondence for four objects.
- Trace name and address.
- Respond to two-step directions during a group activity.

The following list includes ideas for including Hector in many different ways, in many different types of reading activities, while still addressing his unique needs:

- Choose one new vocabulary word per story for Hector to work on.
- Highlight any vocabulary words in the story which he may know.
- When you come to a word in the story Hector may know, have him read just that word aloud, then continue on to the next reader.
- Use flash cards with his known and new vocabulary words.
- Have Hector trace the vocabulary words on paper or with his finger.
- Have Hector listen to the other students reading aloud and answer "wh" questions about the story.
- Ask "wh" questions about the pictures in the reading book.
- Ask "wh" questions about the reading activity itself (e.g., "Who is sitting next to you?" or "What book are you reading?").
- Ask Hector to repeat the title of the book after you or a peer.
- Ask Hector to repeat a key phrase from the story.
- Ask Hector to repeat a peer's brief answer to a question about the story.
- Restate Hector's answers while clearly enunciating the final consonant sounds.
- Use flash cards and reinforce Hector for producing final consonant sounds.
- Have the students identify themselves when they join the reading group, and ask Hector to say his name, also.
- Have Hector trace his name on each work paper and then ask him to state it aloud.
- When a story involves a person's name and/or age, comment on it and ask Hector for his name and age.
- If a story involves a school and/or a teacher, comment on it and ask Hector to name his school and teacher.
- When Hector raises his hand for help, remind Hector to use your name when speaking with you.

- Design worksheets which require Hector to trace his name, age, address, school and teacher's name, and then ask him to read them.
- Whenever there are several objects on a page in the book, ask Hector to count the objects.
- Ask Hector to count the number of students in the reading group.
- Ask Hector to count the number of students in the group who brought their books, are wearing red, are boys, etc.
- Ask Hector to count out pencils or papers to distribute to peers.
- Give Hector simple, two-step directions during reading lessons, such as "Stand up and come here," "Put your book away and take out a pencil," or "Turn the page and tell me what is in the picture."
- Have Hector listen to stories on tape (either commercially prepared or recorded by students) and answer "wh" questions.
- Use a Language Master machine for new vocabulary words.
- Have peers practice their reading aloud skills by reading one-on-one with Hector.
- Include Hector in cooperative learning activities by having students ask him some "wh" questions.
- Allow Hector to have some free reading time to pick a book off the shelf and look through it for pleasure.
- Have Hector say his name, age, etc., into a tape recorder and listen to himself for ending consonant sounds.
- Set up a work folder for Hector with work papers designed to practice his vocabulary words, to count objects, or to trace words and shapes.
- Allow Hector to simply sit and listen to other students read, working on paying attention throughout the story.

Don't forget to ask your special education staff for ideas on how to incorporate various objectives into a reading lesson. You may even find ways to include physical and occupational therapy objectives into reading activities! It's amazing how many creative ideas a group of people can come up with when they are committed to making something work!

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Everything You Always Wanted to Know About My Classroom But Were Afraid to Ask

An elementary special education teacher often has to support as many as fifteen different classroom teachers at one time.

Just as the classroom teacher must know a wealth of information about a student with disabilities in order to serve him or her effectively, so the special education teacher must know a wealth of information about the regular education classroom in order to serve the teacher effectively. Therein lies the dilemma. If a special education teacher has a large caseload, and supports several teachers at once, how can he or she gather enough information about each classroom to offer effective support? In addition to these problems, many special education teachers do not have direct experience with running a regular sized classroom through standard curriculum requirements for a full year, so he or she may not completely understand the needs of the classroom teacher.

Therefore, if a classroom teacher wants effective support, (who doesn't?), he or she will need to share some critical information with the special education teacher and therapists. For example, a student with mental retardation may have a secondary visual impairment. If the classroom teacher occasionally uses an overhead projector, the special education teacher should be aware of this so as to provide suggestions for ways to adapt its use for the student who is visually impaired. This type of information, as well as other information, is best shared in a joint planning session, but can also be shared in writing. And, of course, it is always wonderful to invite the specialists in to observe the class in action!

In order to increase the likelihood of effective support, answers to the following questions should be provided to the support personnel working in the classroom:

1. What are the classroom rules? What is the behavior management plan?
2. What are the textbooks* used for the subjects into which the student is integrated? What reading level are the texts?
3. What other materials* are used regularly (e.g., workbooks) and what are the specific titles? What reading level are these materials?
4. What types of audio-visual materials are used in the classroom? How often is each used?
5. How often are students put into work groups? What rules are in place for working in groups?
6. How often is homework assigned? What type of work is usually given for homework (e.g., practice papers vs. projects)?
7. How often is the blackboard used? For what purpose(s)? Is the material in print or cursive? White, yellow, or colored chalk?
8. What materials are the students expected to have with them on a daily basis (e.g., assignment notebooks, rulers, pencils)?

*Whenever possible, the special education teacher should have a copy of each text or material that he or she is expected to assist in modifying.

Additional Resource

For more information on classroom variables, check out:

Salend, S. & Viglianti, D. (1982). Preparing secondary students for the mainstream. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 14,* 137-140.

49

Go For a Visit

"Seeing is believing."

UNKNOWN

If you're the type that says "seeing is believing," then do it! Integration is happening successfully all across this country, and probably in a classroom nearby. One of the best things a teacher can do is to visit another teacher who has worked through the fears, challenges, and unknowns to achieve a fairly effective integrated program. First of all, by visiting such a classroom, you can see that this is not some wild idea that only your supervisor and/or special education department is espousing. Secondly, it allows you the chance to talk about integration with another **teacher**, usually much more helpful and convincing than listening to consultants or superiors. Thirdly, it is a wonderful opportunity for both teachers to share ideas. Because integration is unique for each child, there is really no textbook set of answers, so collegial sharing becomes very important.

Once you've decided to go and see for yourself, where do you go? To begin with, accept the fact that no classroom you visit will be just like yours. The students will be slightly different, the level of resources will be slightly (or greatly) different, etc. So, while it is helpful to try to find a close match, trust that you will benefit from seeing almost any integrated classroom.

The following ideas may help you find a place to visit:

- Ask the special education colleagues in your building for suggestions.
- Ask your district's special education director for suggestions.

- Ask "integration workshop" presenters, past or future, for places to visit.
- Attend a regional conference on integration and ask presenters for suggestions. Or, look at an old conference brochure for names and schools.
- Call your State Department of Education and ask the special education personnel for suggestions.
- Contact any local advocacy group, such as The Arc or The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH) and ask for suggestions. Many of these organizations give awards to schools for their integration efforts.

Don't forget to invite a colleague along on your visit. It's always great to be able to debrief with someone afterwards!

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Brainstorming by the Rules

"Imagination is more important than knowledge."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Most people, when asked, will profess to having brainstormed before. However, 99% of these individuals have probably not brainstormed according to the original rules! Brainstorming was developed as a structured process by a businessman named Alex Osborne (1963). In running his own business, he had become concerned by his employees lack of ability to be creative. After doing some research, he determined that the greatest inhibitor of creative thought was the fear of judgment or ridicule. So Osborne developed a process which would encourage creativity by not permitting premature judgment.

Now, most people recognize that to say, "That's a lousy idea" is to pass judgment which is likely to inhibit another person's ability to be creative. But what about more subtle judgments like, "You're new here, aren't you? Well, I've been teaching 17 years and . . . " or even "I understand, BUT . . . ." These comments are very common in most so-called brainstorming sessions, but **all** comments are against the rules, according to Osborne. Even those subtle comments can cause someone to stop sharing ideas.

Let's take this concept a step further. Suppose the facilitator leading a brainstorming session says to Bill, "Oh, I really love that idea!" and makes no comment whatsoever following Rachel's idea. How do you suppose Rachel will feel? It's likely that she may begin to shut down and limit her contributions. So, the rule again is: No judgment of any kind. Osborne was so committed to the importance of this that in each of his brainstorming sessions he asked one group member to be the "whistle blower." This person was to literally and figuratively blow a whistle when someone passed judgment, as a friendly reminder to save judgments until a later point.

Osborne's second rule of brainstorming was to shoot for a large quantity of ideas, rather than worrying about quality. Why? Because if individuals are worrying about quality, then they are prejudging their own thoughts and limiting the possibility that their ideas may spark another that is worthwhile. Therefore it is often helpful to set a goal for a minimum number of ideas to be shared before ending the brainstorming session.

What does all of this have to do with the integration of students with disabilities? Although "Brainstorming by the Rules" is the last strategy in this book, it is probably the single most important skill a group of educators needs in order to effectively integrate students with disabilities. Because every situation is so unique and resources are usually too scarce for their needs, educators must be able to use their own thoughts, knowledge, and experience to creatively solve the challenges that integration brings.

So the next time you have a problem that needs solving, gather a small group together—colleagues, students, parents, whomever—and brainstorm.

When you do, be sure to review the rules clearly:

1. No judgment of any kind.
2. Quantity!

Assign a whistle blower (with a whistle) and go for it. You will be pleasantly surprised at the results!

Reference

Osborne, A. (1963). *Applied imagination.* NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.

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Other Ideas

Use this space to list other ideas you've heard, tried, or want to try. It's important to have a safe keeping place for good ideas!

IDEAS
— *for* —
INCLUSION

The Classroom Teacher's Guide to Integrating Students With Severe Disabilities

Across the country, students with severe disabilities are entering regular education classrooms. In response, teachers are quickly trying to upgrade their knowledge base and skills in order to experience success with these students.

Ideas for Inclusion provides classroom teachers with 50 practical, easy to implement strategies for successfully integrating students with moderate and severe disabilities. Each strategy is indexed separately and is just a few pages long. Strategy areas include:

- Curriculum and grading modification;
- Classroom management;
- Working with peer tutors, parents, and paraeducators;
- Facilitating friendships; and
- Many More!

In addition, *Ideas for Inclusion* provides a brief overview of the rationale for integration, a review of relevant terminology, and an explanation of important philosophical principles.

Armed with *Ideas for Inclusion*, the classroom teacher will feel more confident and comfortable about including all students in the learning environment. Its easy to read format is terrific for the teacher who wants to quickly find a good idea.

Ideas for Inclusion is also helpful to others—special educators, administrators, parents, and related professionals—who are promoting and supporting inclusion in schools.

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